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The Zapatistas: Redefining Democracy

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Terms and Abbreviations

Campesino……..peasant farmer, of either mestizo or indigenous descent

Caracol……government centers for the Zapatisa Autonomous Municipalities

Consulta……..a deliberative meeting to discuss major community issues and bring them to a vote

CCRI…….Clandestine Revolutionary Committee

Ejido……..communal land granted by the Mexican governent

JBG……Junta of Good Government

MAREZ…….Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities in Rebellion

Mestizo……...People of both Spanish and Indigenous descent (Mayan, Aztec)

Abstract

By subscribing to the "New World order" , Mexico embarked on a path which would change the destiny of Mexican citizens for ever. On the one hand, neoliberalism with its emphasis on free markets and free trade accelerated the deterioration of life and increased inequality among Mexican citizens, fueling social movements that had been going on for decades before. On the other hand the emergence of a liberal democracy, with its rhetorical emphasis on human rights protection, democratization,and good governance opened a window of opportunity for these newly invigorated social movements that have been oppressed in Mexico through militarization an an authoritarian regime. A now more image conscious Mexican government is concerned about its ability to attract foreign capital to pay back its external debt . As it stands, the road is open for genuine democratization in Mexico, however the path is not going to be through artificially imposed representation structures and free markets. This is not a viable system for the future of Mexico or its indigenous citizens. The Zapatistas self-governance practices can teach important lessons about democracy, and alternatives to a failing liberal democracy model.

The Zapatistas: Redefining Democracy

According to Michael Lowy and Frei Betto, "representative democracy... is necessary, yet insufficient. What we need are superior, more participatory forms of democracy that allow the population to exercise directly their power to decide and to oversee...(2003: 335)" Currently, representative democracy takes the form of either parliamentarianism or presidentialism (top to bottom rule), neither of which adequately address the concerns, needs, and wants of a pluricultural society (Parameswaran 2003; Lowy and Betto 2003). It is especially the most vulnerable sectors of society who lack representation in these 'representative' systems (Mindiola 2006).

In Latin America, indigenous populations are typically the most marginalized and receive even less representation than other groups. Thus they are often those who benefit the least from representative democracy. Marginalization deepens with the deterioration of state sovereignty, an effect of an increased interdependence on international financial institutions. These very same institutions are the driving force behind economic globalization (of which neoliberalism is a huge dimension) that puts the interests of the many into the hands of the few (Parameswaran 2003:324; Mindiola 2006).

Indigenous populations are often only of interest to global capital "because of the resources in their territories or the genetic properties of the plants, animals,

and even their own bodies in the biospheres of which they are the custodians" (Nash 2001: 2). Living in extreme poverty, and often under military pressure, peoples in Latin America are finding fewer and fewer options for survival and are forced to find new alternatives to the existing system which exploits them (Nash 2001). Attempts of indigenous people to expand their range of collective and individual autonomy offer the most innovative response to the loss of self-determination, often posed as an "inevitable consequence of [economic] globalization"(Nash 2001: 2)

This virtual exclusion and exploitation has also led many groups in Latin America to take up arms or join passive resistant social movements. One such social movement which is trying to address these issues of loss of self-determination, exploitation, and lack of representation in both local and national politics is the new Zapatista movement in Mexico. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN), made up of primarily poor indigenous peasant farmers or *campesinos*, speak out for democratic alternatives to neoliberalism (liberal democracy and a free-market economy) which they classify as “a new war of conquest for territories […which] is a strange modernity that moves forward by going backward.”(Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos 1997).

The Zapatistas gained international recognition in 1994 when they took up arms and seized several municipalities in Chiapas, the southernmost state of Mexico, declaring war on the government. After a year of unsuccessful negotiations with a national government, Zapatistas gave up hope of any real progress in dealing with the state (EZLN Jan.2006). In 1994 the first of four "Aguascalientes" was built to provide a space for dialogue and negotiation and to house a de facto rebel government,the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committees (CCRI). In 1995 the EZLN began to organize “autonomous projects” first in the areas of strongest Zapatista control, and continued to expand. The

Zapatistas originally started the projects to afford communities with a local democratic government, based on general assemblies and consensus voting, something indigenous people were denied under the local state government (Collier 2005; Nash 2001).

The most recent Zapatista development has been the organization of fully self-governing or autonomous municipalities within the state of Chiapas. In 2003, the Zapatistas established the *Juntas of Good Government* (JBG) in order to mediate affairs within and between municipalities and promote productive projects in collaboration with national and international civil society (Collier 2005:196; JBG March 2006). The JBG's are of special interest because they have completely redefined the West's notion of a democracy 'of the people, by the people for the people'. The structure and vision of the JBG based on 'governing by obeying' and 'learning by governing' is fascinating and inspiring to say the least.

All election processes are from the bottom up, and the Junta of Good Government govern under the philosophy of 'governing by obeying', where government officials are at the benevolence of their constituencies. There are no professional leaders, the structure is non-hierarchical, and it is a participatory democracy which aims to address the needs and concerns of the people (JBG March 2006).

This new addition to Zapatista government redefine democracy by creating a balance between both representative and direct democracy. Their model based on consocial participatory democracy seems to allow citizens considerable control over political decisions, while at the same time not losing the effiency of more rigid systems like presidentialism or parliamentarianism (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997; Linz and Valenzuela 1994)

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Problem

The development of the Zapatista movement had been happening parallel to the emergence of a new liberal democracy in Mexico (Peeler 1998; Harvey 1998). The transition from an authoritarian regime to liberal democracy, and hope for genuine democratization in Mexico began roughly when the PRI hegemony of over 70 years was defeated in 2000 by Vicente Fox of the opposition party National Action Party (PAN). This breakthrough was seen as a path in the right direction towards democratization in Mexico, after a long history of corruption and abuse of the representative electoral system (Bartra and Otero 2001).

Unfortunately, the material situations of Mexican citizens have not improved since the introduction of liberal democracy. In fact, the lives of many Mexican citizens are actually worse off than they were under the PRI due to Mexico's neoliberal economic policies (Stephen 2002; Sanders 2001).

Indigenous and poor mestizo farmers' demands for inclusion in major socio political decisions are still largely ignored by the state and national governments, reinforcing the marginalization and social tension of these groups (Hogenboom 2004; Mindiola 2006).

Question

In the isolated regions of Chiapas, the Zapatista movement seems to be working to promote a system where people have the ability to directly exerise their power to decide and oversee, as well as assuming the role of primary social provisionary for

their autonomous citizens. Essentially they have created a social democracy in an area experiencing extreme poverty, prone to internal divisions and violence, and deemed to be ungovernable by the state. The Zapatista movement seems to offor insights into solving many of the problems that Mexico's emerging liberal democracy and Presidential system has failed to address. Currently, the benefits of the Zapatista system are felt exclusively within their limited zones of influence. But what implications does their model have for other situations? This paper proposes the following theoretical questions:

1. Can the Zapatista government model be adapted for use on the state level, national, and international levels? Can their model be adapted to other societies and cultures? 2. Is the Zapatista model a more viable alternative to achieve social democracy than liberal democracy?

Structure of Paper

The next chapter, Chapter 1, gives a brief theoretical discussion on different approaches to, and origins of democracy, and the role in which economic globalization and good governance play in democracy today. In chapter 2, the methodological choices for conducting research are outlined and explained. Findings regarding governmental structures, voting practices, and the different functions which the autonomous municipalities take up in order to give better insight into their unique governmental practices are presented. Chapter 3 discusses in brief the factors which have contributed to Mexico's political culture and the relationship between indigenous people in the Mexican state from a historical perspective. Focus will then turn towards marginalization of indigenous people in Mexico and Latin America in general, indigenous autonomy, and the effects of neoliberalism in Mexico. Chapter 4 gives an overview of the Zapatista uprising and the factors which contributed to its occurrence. Chapter 6 discusses in

brief the New Zapatista Movement. Chapter 6 presents different arguments on the failures of liberal democracy and presidential democracy. Chapter 7 discusses the implications for alternative systems. Delegative democracy is considered a possible alternative and the Zapatista model is compared and contrasted to delegative democracy in order to determine whether the theory can work in practice. Chapter 8 begins with a discussion of different criticisms towards the Zapatista *de facto* autonomies, and self-governance. And finally, Chapter 9 provides conclusions.

CHAPTER 1 THEORY

1.1 The Roots of Democracy

Defining democracy is not an easy task in itself, as it has been interpreted and defined in many different ways and has been adapted throughout the different eras of history. Although several definitions and interpretations exist, central to the concept is the rule of "the people."

The modern idea and practice of a government of "the people" by the people, has its roots in ancient Greece, and they were the first to coin the term democracy, *demos* meaning people and *kratos* meaning rule. The ancient Greeks defined democracy as a "constitution in which the poor masses of the population, the demos "ruled" over the rich minority (Peeler 1998:2). The Greek interpretation of democracy is viewed by many democratic theorists as the historic "high point of the radical concept of democracy." (Peeler 1998: 2). By the 20th century, the idea of democracy was established as the "normal" form of government to which any nation is entitled (Sen 1999: 4).

1.2 Types of Democracy

Direct Democracy

Direct democracy allows everyone the opportunity to participate in making all policy decisions. It is termed direct because the power of making decisions is exercised by the people directly, without intermediaries or representatives.

Proponents of direct democracy hold the view that citizens should participate directly, not through their representatives, in making laws and policies. Proponents offer varied reasons to support this view. For one, political activity can be valuable in itself, it socializes and educates citizens (Sen 1999). Most importantly, proponents point out that citizens do not really rule themselves unless they directly decide which laws and policies are to be implemented. In countries and large organizations, however, direct democracy is rarely used because it is often viewed as inefficient and cumbersome (Ford 2002).

There are very few examples of direct democracy, and perhaps the best example of direct democracy is the Athenian democracy in ancient Greece. The Athenian democracy (sometimes called classical democracy) was developed in fifth century Greece and it was one of the first known democracies. As the Athens democracy was direct, there were no elected representatives to vote on the people's behalf, nor were there political parties. The people voted directly on executive bills and legislation themselves. They did have appointed officials, but they were not government representatives. Participation was apparently not open to all Athens' citizens, as the members of the assembly accounted for only about one-sixteenth of the total population of Athens (Dowling 2001). Greek society was highly stratified in terms of class, race, and gender, and there was a supposed natural superiority of males. Approximately one in four people were slaves, which did not have the right to vote. Women were not allowed to vote, and neither were foreigners, even if they were Greeks from other city-states (Hanson 1987; Ober 1989). Those who could participate in the Athens assembly were adult male

citizens over the age of 20, and it was considered a duty for them to do so. In Athens voters had to be physically present in order to vote (Peeler 1998).

Representative Democracy

In contrast to direct democracy, in a representative democracy, people vote to elect representatives in a “free and fair electoral system” to make policy for them under a wide range of "checks and balances" to help ensure “leadership accountability" (Lewis 2006: 1). Most democracies today comprise of some form a representative democracy either presidential or parliamentarian or a combination of the two (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997). In a Presidential democracy, the chief executive (president) is popularly elected, and the terms of office of both the president and assembly are fixed. In a Parliamentarian democracy, the chief executive (prime minister) is elected by parliament, and terms of office are not fixed, since the tenure of the prime minister and cabinet depends on the "competence" of the majority of the parliament, and sometimes, the cabinet may dissolve parliament and call early elections (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997:14) .

The majority of representative democracies are also liberal democracies, a form of representative democracy where the ability of elected representatives and the will of the majority exercise decision-making powers, is subject to the rule of law, and is usually moderated by a constitution which emphasizes the protection of liberties, freedoms, and rights of the individual (McLean 1996). Today, almost half of the world's population live in liberal democratic regimes (Freedom House 2006)

The roots of liberal democracy can be traced to the idea of a social contract. The social contract concepts arose after merchants and craft persons-in England, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands were strong in resistance to state control of their enterprises and began to use contracts in their business dealings

which undermined the control of the state. Contracts were very explicit in their terms, as opposed to custom and legal regulation (Peeler 1998: 6).

The theorists which represented the main channel of social contract thought were John Locke (Second Treatise on Government), from England, and Benedict de Spinoza from the Netherlands. These theorists viewed the social contract as a "revocable agreement to set up a limited government to serve the interests of the parties to the contract, by protecting their natural rights"(Peeler 1998: 6). If those who were appointed to authority were to violate the contract's terms, they would be removed by those who appointed them to power (Peeler 1998). Neither of these theorists abdicated the direct rule by the people, but instead rule by representatives (Peeler 1998). John Stuart Mill (2004), *Considerations on Representative Government*, considered to have been of great influence in the course of modern liberal democratic thought, also advocated representative over direct democracy (Li 1999).

Professor Robert Dahl (1989), argued that the theory of representative liberal democracy brought democratic thought to a "completely new stage" because it enabled a shift of the democratic stage from small city-states (as in ancient Greece) to large nation-states. This change has been viewed by its proponents as a "desirable solution to the competing needs of an effective but also accountable government" (Dahl in Li 1999: 1). According to Dahl (1989: 30 in Li 1999) however, the "institutions of democracy removed government so far from the direct reach of the demos that one could reasonably wonder, as some critics have, whether the new system was entitled to call itself by the venerable name of democracy."

Dahl held the view that today's practice of representative liberal democracy is more like a polyarchy (rule by the many but not by all the people) which can be contrasted to other forms of government such as oligarchy (rule by the few), and

autocracy (rule by one), where political control is highly concentrated and not subject to control by the people (Peeler 1998:15). The concept of polyarchy is a system where voter participation is relatively high and power is relatively dispersed among "competing organized interests" (Peeler 1998:15). A polyarchic regime has institutions that are "inclusive", thus giving scope for many citizens to influence government and "promoting responsiveness by governors"(Peeler 1998:15). Dahl's definition of polyarchy differs slightly to that of a liberal democracy, which puts more weight on limited state control and the rights of private property (Peeler 1999).

Social contractarians, liberalists and neoliberalists alike believe that representative democracy is the only realistic democracy and although citizens should have the "ultimate check on the business of the government," they should not "actually run the government. In their view, citizens should give political leaders the right to rule because in their view, citizens do not usually have clear views on issues or their views are not very intelligent (Locke in Peeler 1998; Mill 2004; Schumpeter 1950; Ford 2002). Both Mill (2004) and Schumpeter (1950), for example, advocated unequal voting rights, giving educated people plural votes as a means of balancing the weight of the ignorant majority. According to Mill, more votes should be given to "wiser" and more "talented" citizens(Mill in Li 1999:1). Mill's distrust of the general public's sentiment and judgment capacities is one important reason which led him to support a representative form of government where important public decisions are to be made by "qualified leaders with knowledge, expertise and wisdom" (Li 1999: 1). Both Mill and Schumpeter criticize the classical Athenian understanding of democracy, while Dahl held it to be "virtually unattainable" (Peeler 1998:15; Li 1999). Mill believed that by having educated, professional leaders, without the interference of the general electorate, decisions would be better and the government will work more efficiently (Mill

2004).

Although democratic theorists such as Locke, Schumpeter and Mill paint a very positive picture of representative democracy, when analyzing representative democracy theory, it is very important to take in account that the separation between who controls the government (theoretically the citizenship), and who runs the government (professional leaders) can create problems in itself.

If the system of representative government remains unchecked and unbalanced, it has the tendency to result in the concentration of power (Li 1999). Theoretically, liberal institutions, a constitutional state, and a system of checks and balances, disperse political power across various interest groups and throughout the society in order to prevent this. In order to prevent the formation of an "entrenched class of self-serving elites", representative democracy also needs to create an array of egalitarian institutions to "ensure [...] equal opportunity for all, and a high degree of social mobility"(Li 1999:1). Proponents of participatory democracy, which will be discussed below, take the issue of the emergence of a class of self-serving ruling elites to the heart of their argument.

Participatory democracy

According to Sen (1999: 10), who writes about democracy is a human value, "political freedom is a part of human freedom in general, and exercising civil and political rights is a crucial part of good lives of individuals as social beings. Political and social participation has intrinsic value for human life and well-being. To be prevented from participation in the political life of the community is a major deprivation." Theorists like Mill (2004) thought also thought a key justification for democracy was that it provides a mechanism for the expansion of individual capacities and moral self-development, but claim that this need for participation can be fulfilled during the election process when the general public chooses their

representatives in the government (Mill 2004). Proponents of participatory democracy however interpret participation in a different way. They believe that, regardless of the system, direct or representative, for a democracy to truly represent a government of the people by the people, it would require the greatest amount of participation from all members of society where "major socioeconomic choices [...] are democratically discussed and decided upon by the population itself, and not by a handful of exploiters or their supposed market laws"(Lowy and Betto 2003: 335).

Parameswaran (2003: 325), who writes on participatory democracy asserts that participation has to be "creative." Though Paranaswaran does not give an exact definition of 'creative', from the writings, I interpret the term as flexible, dynamic, "just", and that it promotes "sustainable development". Parameswaran (2003: 325) believes that if democracy is not creative**,** it will "only equate to mass slavery, to put it in strong words, or mass involvement in the execution of projects conceived by a very few, to put it mildly."

Participation must be universal and not limited to only a few individuals. In order for people to actually participate "meaningfully" however, both political and economic activities would need to be on a small enough scale, "on a human scale" (Paraneswaran 2003: 325). Thus, advocates of participatory democracy assert that participation demands political decentralization and devolution of power (Woodin and Lucas 2004 Parameswaran 2003 MacEwan 1999). Power relations need to be reversed, and rule needs to be changed from top-bottom to bottom-top. According to Parameswaran, local community needs to be at the center of democratic institutions. She describes it is thus: "[u]ltimate sovereignty" should be vested in the local community. The power of larger ruling bodies should be agreed upon at the local level, and there should also be programs which educate and enable citizens to take up the responsibility of governing themselves (Paraneswaran 2003:

328)

Proponents of participatory democracy assert that democracy demands revolutionary changes in economics, ethics, in politics of the society in order to function (Parameswaran 2003; MacEwan 1999). These revolutionary changes have to be brought about through processes which in themselves are "consonant with the changes desired." In other words, democracy cannot be brought through dictatorship, nor can ethics be enhanced through corruption (Parameswaran 2003: 326).

When considering participatory democracy, it is important to take into account that participation requires that people have the ability, the willingness, and the "necessary knowledge and skills" to participate (Paraneswaran 2003: 325). A good majority of people in many countries, especially in Latin America, are historically conditioned to not participate .This lack of participation often stems from a practical inability to participate, as we will see in the discussion of Mexico (Bartra and Otero 2005).

When analyzing the participatory democracy ideology, one must also consider that there can be certain tensions underlying participation, such as who is involved , in the participation process, how, and on whose terms. According to White (2000),

"[w] hile participation has the potential to challenge patterns of dominance, it may also be the means through which existing power relations are entrenched and reproduced. The arenas in which people perceive their interests and judge whether they can express them are not neutral. Participation may take place for a whole range of unfree reasons. It is important to see participation as a dynamic process, and to understand that its own form and function can become a focus for struggle (White 2000: 1)".

Delegative Democracy

Another subgroup of participatory democracy is called "delegative democracy," a type of deliberative democracy which according to Ford,

"combines the best elements of direct and representative democracy by replacing artificially imposed representation structures with an adaptive structure founded on real personal and group trust relationships. Delegative democracy empowers individually and encourages widespread direct participation in

democratic organisation, without unduly burdening or disenfranchising those members who, members who, for lack of time, interest, or knowledge, would prefer to take a more passive role" (2002: 1).

Ford's interpretation of delegative democracy is not to be confused with O'Donnell's (1994) for lack of time, interest, or knowledge, would prefer to take a more passive role." (2002: 1)definition of delegative democracy, where the "delegate" is seen as the the chief executive in a presidential democracy.1)

In a delegative democracy, each member of the electorate is independently given the choice of participating *actively* in the organization by becoming a delegate, or participating *passively* by delegating their individual vote to a delegate. Voters without the time or interest to play an active role are not forced to learn about and pay attention to distant candidates running for various specialized offices and representative bodies, or to study and think carefully about a long string of referenda in order to make "responsible and well-informed decisions". Instead, passive participants merely need to know or know of a delegate who they feel they can trust to look out for their interests. Individuals are free to choose their delegates on whatever proximity they view is most important, whether it be geographic location, identity, economic situation or other common interests (Ford 2002: 2).

Another interesting feature of delegative democracy is that there are very low barriers to participation. For those citizens who would like to take a more active role in decision-making and influencing politics they are not forced to battle it out in highly competitive and expensive election campaigns. Authority is vested in the delegates themselves, and depending on their voting power (each delegate has a weighted power depending on how many people delegate their votes to them), different delegates can exercise their varying levels of “decision power.” Anyone meeting certain “basic qualifications” can become a delegate, and while delegates may compete with each other for the votes of the electorate, they do not win or lose seats in an election (Ford 2002: 3).

Becoming a delegate does not by itself confer any representative power, it only indicates a willingness to act on behalf of others and a commitment to play a direct rule in the operation of the organization and take responsibilities for decisions made. To maximize the chance that individual voters will be able to find delegates who they identify with closely and with whom they can interact directly, there should be no fixed limit on the total number of delegates and it should be easy for anyone to become a delegate if they want to (Ford 2002).

Delegative democracy allows for anonymity in the voting and delegating process in order to avoid social pressures and coercion. All "posts," made by individuals are private, both to other individuals and delegates. Although privacy is respected, transparency is very important in the decision-making process in order to ensure accountability of delegates to their voters and to the community at large. Thus, all formal deliberate decisions made by delegates must be public.Voters must be able to watch a delegates actions closely in order to determine whether a delegate is acting in their interest, and in the interest of the public (Ford 2002:4).

The inherent advantage in delegative democracy is that it embodies representation without exclusion. The primary power structures in a delegative democracy are bottom-up, where the citizenship has a choice to participate or delegate instead of being imposed upon by top-down fixed representative bodies. In addition, the system is very flexible. Acording to Ford, delegative democracy can empower individuals to control their own level and "style" of participation (Ford 2002:3). Delegates are free to determine their own level of participation in order to avoid becoming overwhelmed or overburdened. Delegates have the choice to participate in forums most closely related to or affecting them , while delegating or *redelegating* (the ability of a delegate to delegate their vote to another delegate) their vote to others they trust in other forums that they are not so

informed about or interested in. Both voters and delegates are free to withdraw their vote from delegates at any time and designate them to another if they so wish (Ford 2002:6).

There are so of course some very important disadvantages to delegative democracy. First of all, delegative democracy has the premise that anyone can participate as a delegate. This can lead to some problems in large organization and countries where the body of delegates could grow into the millions. Such a large body of delegates could not hope to fit in a room, and even getting them all into one geographic location, or paying them all full-time salaries could be "prohibitively costly"(Ford 2002: 8) .

Another possible problem is internal corruption, and misrepresentation. Even though delegates may not wield tremendous power individually, the option of using that power in secrecy to make important decisions can "create an irresistible temptation to use it irresponsibly". Accumulated over a large number of “similarly minded delegates,” such temptations could have a substantial negative impact (Ford 2002:6). This is however less likely to arise in delegative as opposed to representative democracy, because if a voter is not satisfied with decisions that the delegate is making they can choose to delegate the vote to someone else. This in itself is a way to check delegates, because they know they can lose voting power at any time (Ford 200).

Because there's no way to limit the amount of voting power that one delegate can have, it is certain that disparities will emerge among the different delegates. However according to Ford, disparities in voter power is not a problem provided they "adequately represent" the will of the people (Ford 2002: 3).

1.3 Economic Globalization and Neoliberalism

Globalization can be described as "…a widening, deepening and spreading of

worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the spiritual" (Held et.al 1999: 2). Economic globalization can be defined as "the greater global interconnectedness of the modern world" (Woodin and Lucas 2004: 6). The definition can also been adapted to include the interconnectedness of livelihoods, and of the production of goods and services (Held et.al 1999).

Woodin and Lucas (2004) take their definition of economic globalization straight from economic trade theory, which defines economic globalization as "the ever increasing integration of national economies into a giant one-size-fits-all global economy through trade and investment rules and privatization, aided by technological advances, and driven by corporate power" (Woodin and Lucas 2004: 6). This seems a more realistic definition than simply the "global interconnectedness of the modern world," which leaves out the fact that *economic* globalization has little to do with such world values as democracy (see Sen 1999) or the protection of human rights (Woodin and Lucas 2004: 6). Quite to the contrary of the "cozy" (Woodin and Lucas 2004: 6) definition as a "interconnectedness of the modern world," Vadi (2001: 129) believes that the strategic goal of economic globalization is to "maximize profits by penetrating economies and appropriating their human and natural resources in order to exploit them more fully and to incorporate them into the ambit of global capitalist relations". I share this view.

The global financial market has established a link between all other market processes where, through economic globalization, national governments end up with increasingly less control over their economic policy (Demmers et.al 2004; Shutt 2001). Economic globalization is primarily enforced by the Bretton Woods institutions, which are the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO). The "tactical dimension of economic

globalization is *neoliberalism* [my emphasis], an operational set of policies" designed to meet "strategic objectives" which include privatizing state-owned enterprises, tariff reductions, eliminating barriers to foreign investment, reducing social provision, currency devaluation, centralizing decision-making, and market orientation (Vadi 2001: 129). Neoliberalism argues that free markets, free trade, and the unimpeded flow of capital will produce the greatest social, political and economic good (Korten 2001). Neoliberalists argue for decreased government control in business affairs, saying that too much state control inhibits the market and thus civil liberties (MacEwan 1999).

Another feature of neoliberalism is that it measures everything in economic growth. Countries, not individuals or groups of people, are the units of analysis, and little to "no attention is given" to how the benefits from neoliberalist policies are distributed among people within a country (MacEwan 1999: 31) This has led some critics to doubt the viability of neoliberal theory. According to MacEwan, neoliberal claims "are but crude myths, having only a vague connection to reality, [...] once social and political considerations are allowed to override the market, the whole neoliberal position disintegrates"(MacEwan 1999: 35).

Democracy and Neoliberalism

The neoliberal promotion of democracy has reduced (both theoretically and politically) the roles of the main intermediaries of political representation, political struggle and true consensus building. This has led to a loss of sovereignty and state power, where neoliberal institutions continuously gain control of world financial and political systems. According to Demmers" it is becoming increasingly difficult to legitimately incorporate other values, interests and goals in the policymaking process than those fitting within neoliberal parameters (Demmers et.al 2004: 11). The United States, a primary influence in the policy

decisions of the Bretton Woods institutions, "routinely forces" elected governments in the third world (often through the IMF) to abandon election commitments which are "not continual to Washington", while at the same time insisting that any attempts to overthrow the democratic regime will provoke "a severe US response" (Shutt 2001: 148).

In terms of citizenship, the linking of democracy to economic globalization has "contributed to the decline in quality as well is the significance of citizenship" (Demmers 2004: 12). As important decisions effecting the international community are continually made by secret elite councils, corporations, and the undemocratically elected leaders of the Bretton Woods institutions, locally elected officials have less say in national politics. The options offered to the citizen are becoming far less meaningful, especially for the bottom 80% of the citizenry that appears to be losing out as a consequence of economic globalization (Demmers 2004: 12).

This response of inability to actively participate in the political and economic decision-making process has led to increased voter apathy, as well as many voters feeling helpless and frustrated. In Mexico this happens especially among the indigenous populations, who feel they are not represented at all and often go even as far as boycotting elections, and launching mass demonstrations (Nash 2006). In many Latin American countries this exclusion has even lead to severe violence and social movements, including the Zapatista uprising in 1994 (Shutt 2001; Mindiola 2006).

Perhaps most striking about the neoliberal theory, in the context of an ideology which promotes democracy, is that it is expansionist and it locks out alternatives to governance and democracy. In fact, the slogan for neoliberalism, first quoted by Margret Thatcher previous prime minister of Great Britain, is "There Is No Alternative" to globalized capitalism. It has even been turned into a

popular acronym to describe neoliberalism TINA (Shah 2006: 1)

Despite a growing body of evidence on the negative social impacts of neoliberalism (see Korten 2001;Fisher and Ponniah 2003; MacEwan 1999; Woodin and Lucas 2004;Shutt 2001) it's proponents do not blame the structure of the free market system, but yet on the actual governing process itself (Demmers et.al 2004). The World Bank began to use the term *good governance* in order to draw attention away from the World Bank's failing Structural Adjustment Programs and to put the blame on the governing practices in those countries. (Datemmers et.al 2004)

Good governance in the Era of Neoliberalism

Although the term remains rather vague, good governance is defined as "the manner in which power is exercised in the management of the country's economic and social resources for development." Good governance is to be achieved through "enhanced accountability" within the public sector, transparency and "openness" in decision-making, the rule of law, more efficient public management, and "capacity building" to enable the initiation and implementation of market-based economic reforms, an "essential element" for good governance (The World Bank 1992: 1 in Demmers 2004: 306).

Demmers et al. (2004) gives a very critical analysis of the term good governance, and asserts that "for each of the institutions and countries promoting good governance, it's had clearly to do with the use of control, authority and power" (Demmers 2004:7), as opposed to participation, transparency, and democracy. He goes on to assert that the rhetorics of the World Bank began to change from an anti-communist to a pro-democratic stance in an attempt to further the economic interests of the Bretton Woods institutions and the United States in developing countries:

"The discourse of good governance emerged at the time that the promotion of democratization had already

become an important element of the dominant international agenda for development. The emphasis on democracy was triggered by the shift of US foreign policy in the 1980s as soon as the international communist threat faded, and the risk that the democratization of nonindustrialized countries would be at odds with American economic interests and convictions were strongly diminished, pro-democracy policies and participatory development replaced the anti-Communist and therefore frequently pro-authoritarianism policies of the US and Bretton Woods institutions (2004: 7)."

Despite the Bretton Woods institutions' pro democratic, good governance, pro-human rights and pro participation rhetorics however, the neoliberal institutions continue to have an underlying free-market agenda which measures success in terms of economic growth, and seems to ignore many of the social factors and negative consequences of their system. Their policies are not necessarily in the best interest of the common good, and thus their rhetorics seem to be unsubstantiated (Demmers et al. 2004; Korten 2001).

Ironically, neoliberalism does provide a window for social movement and change, if only indirectly. The World Bank's rhetoric provides these groups more protection against military oppression as several states in Latin America are becoming more image conscious due to increased dependence on attracting international capital to pay back their foreign aid debts (Collier, Collier 2005)

CHAPTER 2 METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

2.1 Location of field research

San Cristobal de las Casas, in the state of Chiapas, was chosen as a base for fieldwork because it is the the most centrally located city with access to the Zapatista autonomous municipalities. In San Cristóbal, there is access to various resources on my topic which were not readily available other places. It is the center for many anthropological libraries, the home of several academics who have done research on the Zapatistas, community theatres showing weekly documentaries on the Zapatistas, anthropological institutes, and most all of the NGO’s working with the Zapatistas have their main offices in San Cristobal. In

addition, the Zapatista autonomous municipality of Oventic was only an hour and a half van ride from San Cristóbal.

2.2 Methodological Choices

When deciding on different methodology, a researcher can start by asking themselves "which data are most appropriate to the research problem"? Is a researcher more interested in what people are feeling, thinking, or what they're doing? (Silverman 2004: 61). The topic of this paper centers around alternatives to liberal representative democracy, and considers the Zapatista government structure as a possible alternative. The primary aim in doing field research was to gather facts about the Zapatista 'way of doing'. Information about what people are thinking or feeling is only considered if it in some way directly relates to or adds valuable insight into the research topic.

The primary data that was collected pertained to the Zapatista government. This included their electoral process, government tasks and responsibilities, term limits, government structure, role as social provisionary etc. The research was centered primarily around the Juntas of Good Government (JBG), which began in August 2003. Since the JBG's are a relatively new government initiative, there is very little academic information available on them and their government practices. It was determined that interviews with the actual government officials themselves would to be the best method for gathering this data.

While in the field, certain problems with access to the different regions of Zapatista control arose due to the danger of paramilitary violence in the region. This limited the scope of my research, and required the gathering of supplemental data through interviews with researchers that had substantial knowledge or had done extensive research on the Zapatista communities and government practices.

Interviews

During the period of January 2006 to March 2006 I carried out 17 interviews in Mexico City and the state of Chiapas. Interviews were primarily conducted with three different groups. The first group was made up of members of the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) general command; the Juntas of Good Government in Oventic and De Garrucha (Chiapas, Mexico); and Zapatista citizens not affiliated with either the Zapatista military or civil government.

The second group was made up of members from local NGOs including Fray Bartolome de Las Casas Human Rights Center and CIEPAC-Center for Political and Economic investigations for Community Action. For reasons of safety and anonymity, the identity of the some NGOs, NGO officials, and all of Zapatista citizens is not revealed.

The third group is composed of academics and authors with a relevant background in the topic of study. These include anthropologist, author, and professor emeritus, June Nash; journalist and magazine editor Juan Anzaldo Meneses- CE-ACATL, Senior Professor for Latin American Culture Studies-UNAM, Dr. Jose Moreno; and Professor in the department of Philology-UNAM, Dr.Carlos Lenkersdorf.

Type of Interviews

After deciding that it was primarily interviews, as opposed to other methods which would give me access to the information I needed, the next choice was then what type of interviews (e-mail, telephone, or face-to-face) and what structure they should take (standardized/unstandardized, structured or informal conversations).

I chose to conduct face-to-face interviews with Zapatista government officials, EZLN general command, and the Zapatista community members for several reasons. Although the least expensive option, e-mail interviews would

have been infeasible because very few, if any, of the Zapatistas that I had planned on interviewing had access to e-mail. This also holds true for telephones, as the Zapatista communities communicated with CB radios and did not have access to telephones. Besides the government centers, the Caracols, virtually none of the communities have neither electricity nor Internet access. A more fundamental reason for choosing face-to-face interviews from methodological standpoint, was that there was the larger opportunity to ask follow-up questions and expand on ideas. In face-to-face interviews, it is also easier to see whether an interviewee understands the questions (Johananessen et.al 2004). There's also something to do be said for personal chemistry and a face-to-face interview. If a good rapport is built up during an interview there is the possibility of getting more information than would be available over the phone or through e-mail, and the opportunity of scheduling follow-up interviews if need be (Johananessen et.al 2004). Interviews with academics and researchers were conducted face-to-face when possible, or by e-mail.

Interview Structure

Methodological choices centered around fact gathering, as opposed to measuring what people were thinking, or what their opinions were on a certain topic. *Positivism* , which focuses on data that provides access to facts or beliefs out there in the world, seemed to be a plausible guideline for conducting research (Silverman 2004).One positivist approach is conducting standardized interviews (Silverman 2004: 89). Positivists argue that standardized interviews can be more easily cross checked, and thus are a more reliable set of data (Silverman 2004). Although this may be, throughout my research it didn't always happen that I was after the same information from every informant, nor did I always need to cross check the information, so standardized interviews were not applicable. Also,

standardized interviews, with questions asked in the same order, is quite a rigid approach. Since I was after general facts about different groups, I opted for a method which would allow me more flexibility.

Interviews ended up being primarily semi-structured, i.e. open-ended questions with certain key themes. These themes included: 1) the Zapatista way of doing, i.e. governing practices, communal living practices, education, health etc. 2) the Zapatista worldview 3) the Zapatista movement These topics were chosen because I was most interested in seeing how the Zapatistas govern, what kind of procedures they had, and how similar or different it was to Western forms of organization.

Observation

In addition to interviews, I conducted two weeks observation in two Zapatista communities. While in San Cristobal de las Casas I was able to get authorization from Fray Bartolome Center for human rights to enter into the Zapatista communities of Emiliano Zapata and Las Tacitas in order to conduct observations.

The reason to conduct observation was primarily to gain knowledge that was not possible to gather in another way. It was also a good way to distinguish between what people say versus how things really are. Observation can also be helpful when there are language barriers, ethical barriers, etc., and can be used as a supplemental method to find answers for research questions or see them from another view point. However I did not choose observation as my primary method, as it is normally very time consuming and resource draining, and could not provide the majority of the information that I was after (Johannessen et.al 2004).

Written texts

In terms of researching the Zapatista ‘way of doing’ text served primarily as

supplemental data to interviews and observation, not a source of analysis in itself. In other parts of the paper, text is used to present varying opinions and viewpoints on the subject matter discussed.

Ethics: Covert Observation Versus Informed Consent

When conducting research there are always certain ethical questions to consider. A fundamental one being the decision to conduct *covert* or *overt* research. Covert access means that research is being conducted without a subject' s knowledge. In contrary, overt access is based on informing subjects and getting their agreement (Silverman 2004). All of the interviews conducted were performed with overt access. In fact, in order to use any type of recording device in interviews with Zapatista citizens, authorization would have to be granted by the Junta of Good Government. Any information obtained otherwise, was specifically not to be used in this project. In Oventic, I was able to get authorization to interview the general command of the EZLN, and the JBG themselves, as well as several others on two separate occasions. While staying in the Zapatista communities however, it was impossible to get authorization from the JBG beforehand for each individual that I spoke with, therefore, interviews had to be presented as informal conversations and could not be recorded. Zapatista citizens were well aware that I needed authorization from the JBG to interview them, however they allowed the information obtained in these conversations to be used as long as their identities were concealed.

2.2 Findings

Currently, there are five regions of Zapatista control: Los Altos, Los Altamiranos, El Norte, La Selva Tteltal, and La Selva Tzotzil. Within these five regions, are political centers known as "caracols" or seashells, which include Oventic, Roberto

Barrios, Morelia, La Realidad, de Garracha. Each region is made up of four to six Zapatista Municipalities in Rebellion (MAREZ), and there are 30 municipalities in total (Cal y Mayor 2005: EZLN January 2006) . In the Caracols, there is both a house for the civil government,"Casa de la Junta de Buen Gobierno" [House of the Good Government Junta], which houses the JBG and 1 or 2 delegates from each one of the Autonomous Councils of that region, and a house for the military, the EZLN general command and the 'Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee' (CCRI) (obsv. Oventic, De Garracha 2006; Cal y Mayor 2005).

The functions of the Rebel Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities are the provision of justice; community health; education; housing; land; work; food; commerce; transportation; information and culture; and local movement. In addition they emphasize gender equality and try to encourage women to participate at all levels of civil government (EZLN January 2006; women's cooperative president 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003)

Table 1

Zones of jurisdiction	**Number of MAREZ**
Altamirano	7
Los Altos	7
Norte	7
Selva Tojolobal	4
Selva Tseltal	4

Table 2

Civil government	**Regional government**	**Municipal government**	**Community government**
description	junta of good government together with one or two delegates from the MAREZ	autonomous councils together with an appointed body of officials engaged in different commissions of work	community representatives
total number	5	30	exact number unknown

Table 3

Military	EZLN	CCRI
Description	Zapatista Army	civil appendage of the EZLN, designed as a checks and balance to monitor the EZLN

Government Structure

There are three officially recognized levels of civil government within the MAREZ: 1. Regional- the Junta of Good Government, usually 4-5 representatives, 2. Municipal- Autonomous Municipal Council, each representative is chosen for one area of administration within the autonomous municipality, the number can vary 3.The community-representatives of the communities, numbers vary. See table 1 (JBG De Garrucha Feb. and Oventic March 2006).

24 delegates are elected every three years by a grand assembly in each municipality. Delegates can not be reelected, and there's a stipulation that 50% of the positions of the Junta must be allotted to women. There are no special qualifications or requirements that one needs in order to be a member of the civil government. The members learn everything from their predecessors.

The members of the Good Government Juntas change continually. "Rotations" last from eight to 15 days (according to the region), after which the junta is replaced. The reason for such a quick rotation is to allow for the work of the JBGs to be rotated among the members of all the autonomous councils of each region. This is so that the task of governing is not exclusive to one group and learning is for the greatest number of people possible. This serves to reduce corruption and give all members of their society an opportunity to directly participate in local government (JBG Oventic March 2006; EZLN March 2006 Subcommandante Marcos 2003)

Although there are three different tiers of civil government, the Zapatistas are a 'nonhierarchical' organization. This means that among the three levels of the Zapatista civil government (community, municipal, JBG), no single body has executive power over the other, rather they complement each other.

Since Zapatista government had spread from the community to the regional

level, the JBG was created in order to counteract an unbalanced development in the Autonomous Municipalities and the communities and to mediate conflicts which might arise between Autonomous Municipalities, and between Autonomous Municipalities and government municipalities. Their functions also include the protection of human rights; the monitoring and implementation of community projects and work; keeping law and order in Zapatista territory; conducting foreign policy with international civil society; and to cooperate with the CCRI of the EZLN to promote and approve the participation of Zapatista citizens in activities or events outside the rebel communities (JBG Oventic March 2006; Salmonelli 2005). In other words, the JBG only coordinates the MAREZ but does not replace their functions. They act as a mediary between communities, regions, the state, and international actors like NGOs, but the ultimate political power lies within the communities (Cal y Mayor 2005; JBG March 2006).

Within MAREZ, the communities name their authorities, local health promoters, community teachers, and elaborate their own laws based on social, political, economic, and gender equality among the inhabitants of diverse ethnic communities (EZLN Jan.2006; Flood 1999). The indigenous communities themselves decide, at an assembly of all their members, whether or not they will belong to the Zapatista autonomous municipality. It is the communities who elect their representatives for the Autonomous Municipal Council, and as mentioned above they may be removed if they do not fully comply with the communities' mandates (JBG March 2006; Flood 1999).

The civil government does not have the power to make such major decisions as going to war or signing a peace agreement without first consulting with the communities through a 'consulta', or 'consultation', directly translated. A consulta the is roughly a referendum where intense discussions in each community is as central to the process as the vote itself. Sometimes consultas can take months,

and have been a "great source of annoyance to the Mexican government, which always wants an answer to its proposals on the spot or within days" (Flood 1999: 1)

The consultations take place in every community and ejido where there are Zapatistas. Voting is direct, free, and democratic. After the voting, official reports of the results of the assemblies are prepared. These reports specify the date and place of the assembly, the number of people who attended (men, women and children older than 12 years old), opinions and principal points discussed, and the number of people who voted. It was such a consulta that decided that the 1994 rising would happen, although it was decided a year before Marcos and the army command thought they were ready. Consultas have decided all major dealings between the EZLN (and now the JBG) and talks with the government. The decision to accept the San Andres agreement and later to break off talks with the government were all determined by consultas (JBG March 2006; Flood 1999).

Unlike the Mexican state government, which has a history of authoritarian rule, neglect, and oppression of the indigenous people, the Zapatistas seem to have provided a form of local democratic government that not only seems to be working very well, it is actually the more democratic of the two governments (Nash 2006;JBG March 2006). Their initiatives are not only inspiring, due to their carefully planned and implementation thus far, they seem to represent a realistic alternative to indigenous self government and a working social democracy within their zone of influence.

Role as Social Provisionary

Unlike the Mexican government, the Zapatista government responds **t**o the basic needs of the people now in providing free health care, education, and livelihoods to all of their citizens (interviews, observation 2006). This is a "contradiction to

neoliberal system the demands of which are that people must sacrifice such social services now in the name of greater prosperity in the future" (MacEwan 1999:6). The Zapatistas respect and value human needs and community, and seem to define development by a broader set of goals than just material gain (Zapatista citizen E. J., EZLN March 2006).

Health is one of the Zapatista's largest priorities, and efforts are moving along progressively. In 1995 they began to push for clinics in every municipality. Now there are several clinics in the municipalities, but Oventic is still the central clinic. Oventic gets all of the supplies and distributes them to the other clinics. La Clinica Guadalupe has been around since 1992, and in 1994, the year of the rebellion most of their activities were based on prevention and education, about water, latrines, nutrition. Now the clinic is quite impressive. It has specialized departments including a gynecological, an obstetrician and a dentistry department. It also has a laboratory, a two bed infirmary, a waiting room, and an emergency room. They have a cooperation with EMTs in San Cristobal Tuxtla Guiterrez, and patients can go to these hospitals for serious problems that the clinic does not have the resources to handle (Zapatista hospital coordinator January 2006).

The clinic uses a combination of both conventional and natural or folk medicine. It is is open 24 hours every day and is open for everyone, even non-Zapatistas. It is free for Zapatistas but non-Zapatistas have to pay on a sliding scale (Zapatista hospital coordinator January 2006). Many non-Zapatistas, go to the clinic because it is cheaper,on average 50% less than state hospitals or pharmacies, and some even say that it's better than the state run clinics (Zapatista citizen E. 2006; Zapatista hospital coordinator January 2006).

Zapatista clinics have the help and direct participation of specialists, surgeons, dentists, doctors, and nurses from national and international civil society, as well as from students and assistants in medicine and odontology from

UNAM, from UAM and from other institutions of higher education. These doctors all work voluntarily, and they sometimes even pay out of their pockets. Unfortunately the clinic lacks personnel and materials. All of this is taking place under conditions of extreme poverty, and technical and information limitations (Zapatista hospital coordinator January 2006). In addition, the Mexican government does everything possible to block national and international NGOs that are trying to work with the Zapatistas in improving their situation (Salmonelli 2005).

In terms of education, legacies left over from indigenismo can still be seen in Chiapas' school system. The government's plan isn't to empower the indigenous peoples. The children don't learn to speak their native language in state schools. I spoke with an official for the Education Department for the state of Chiapas whose sole responsibilities are to improve the view that indigenous people have of themselves. In other words he encourages teachers to promote cultural diversity. He says that most of the teachers in indigenous communities are either of Spanish descent or mestizo, and they convince students that to be indigenous is to be uncivilized. To live traditionally is to live in a backward state. This leads to students being very ashamed to be indigenous. Thus they do not learn their own language well because they are embarrassed, but they do not necessarily learn Spanish well either (Chiapas Educational Department Official 2006) .

The Zapatista secondary education curriculum has six major subject areas: 1. Communication and languages, 2. Mathematics, 3. Social sciences, 4. Natural sciences 5. Humanities, and 6. Art, theater and music. Depending on the ethnic makeup of the community and the availability of teachers, most courses are taught in both Spanish and the native language of the community. For example, in the community of Oventic which is primarily Tzotzil speaking, subjects are taught both in Spanish and Tzotzil. Apart from the six subjects, traditional customs and

traditional medicine is also taught, along with the Zapatista anti-capitalist philosophy and social movement (Zapatista school official 2006). Despite the very religious background of many indigenous groups, religion is not a part of the curriculum. Literacy and primary education are hardly widespread, but one region already has an autonomous secondary school which, recently graduated a new generation made up of men and women. Education is free to all students (Zapatista school official 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003) .

Even though the Zapatistas have worked with local education officials to design their curriculum to be the same as the state curriculum so that it would be recognized in the case that the San Andres Accords were implemented. However, because the accords were never implemented, the Mexican government does not recognize educations received from the autonomous schools. This makes it very difficult for Zapatista students to go on to higher education at the state level. This is disheartening for the school official that I spoke with at Oventic (Zapatista school official January 2006).

Neither the educational services nor health services take in all the zapatista communities, but the majority now have a means of obtaining medicine, being treated for an illness and having a vehicle for taking them to the city in case of illness or serious accident. Currently the Zapatistas are building a new hospital in the community are of Emiliano Zapata because the Caracol De Garrucha doesn't have the means to reach communities fast enough with their ambulances.

In addition to education and health, the Autonomous Councils look at problems with land, work and trade, where they are making a little progress. They also look at the issues of housing, food, culture, and information. In culture, the defense of language and cultural traditions is being promoted above all. In information, news in local languages is being transmitted through the various Zapatista radio stations. The radio stations even transmit messages recommending

that men respect women , and calling for women to organize themselves and to demand respect for their rights (EZLN January 2006; subcommandante Marcos 2003). This is due to the fact that the Zapatista government has made the promotion of gender equality a major priority. Currently this is an area where they are experiencing the most difficulties, although they are making some progress. Women hold high ranks in the EZLN, and they hold ranks in all of the governing bodies. Even though the majority of positions are still held by men, gender equality is much better now than it was before the Zapatista uprising and it is continuing to progress (Subcommandante Marcos 2003;Xulum Chon January 2006). As an example, in 2004 there were only 4 women in the JBG in Oventic, and now there are 12 (JBG March 2006). There are also a higher percentage of girls attending school now than there was before the Zapatista uprising (Eber 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003). These accomplishments can be contrasted with the other non-Zapatista communities, where in many cases, women are treated as unequal (Nash 2006).

Preventing Inequality

In terms of preventing inequality, the Zapatistas have found ways even under extreme poverty and military oppression.

As mentioned above, preventing those with disproportionate wealth from gaining undue influence over the political agenda is "the single most important area of reform needed to enhance the quality of democracy." Even though the Zapatistas function primarily on the barter system, they do acknowledge the dangers of this happening. They realize that there can be instances of certain communities fairing better than others, due to available resources, soil richness, and human resources, which brings up questions of rising internal frictions. Thus, one of the Zapatistas major goals is to balance out the different communities and their growth by

building up self-sustaining economies, helping the communities to help themselves. This is done with finances from commercialization through cooperatives, i.e. coffee, honey, clothing and textiles, art, and other Zapatista products. Of course it should be pointed out that much of the money that they receive for their self-sustaining economy would not be possible without foreign markets for their coffee and international NGOs (Eber; EZLN January 2006)

They have several Zapatista stores in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, as well is cooperatives in the Caracols and many of their communities. 20% of the money earned from the profits from the cooperatives stays in the cooperatives to maintain them, while 80% of the profits go to the communities. The communities are free to do with the money whatever they wish to do with it (EZLN March 2006;Xulum Chon January 2006). The workers in the cooperatives do not receive payment, though everything goes to the community, and they seem satisfied with that (Xulum Chon 2006; Zapatista citizen J., G., V. 2006).

For example, everyone gets a certain amount of corn, candles, beans, and other staple items as a ration every month. Anything above and beyond that, people obtained by trading in either other goods or services. Everyone works together. According to seven interviews with Zapatista members, as well as several informal conversations the consensus is that, although the scope of services provided by the Zapatistas is "not enough" it's better than before the revolution, and it is much better than what the state provides them. Everyone has employment, and can choose their own livelihood, and receives all of the services (i.e. health, education). Workers begin at the age of 15 to 18 depending on the type of work and if they want to work or not. Once Zapatistas turn 18 , they are expected to take on a duty of their choice in order to contribute to the community (Zapatista citizen 1-7 2006; EZLN January 2006).

The collective community system, based on bartering can be a problem

when outsiders such as NGOs infiltrate the communities creating inequalities among its members, and inequalities between communities. In other one of the "chief concerns" of the MAREZ is that NGOs and others use their contacts with communities to raise funds that don't get to the community in the end, in essence exploiting the rebels to run an organization and pay outsiders. This is not an unfounded concern since at times "70 to 80% of international aid turns into salary, overhead, and benefits for those who generate it "(Salmonelli 2005: 165). Same document Thus, their concern over NGOs and what rights they have in the communities and monitoring every last detail of their doings is a driving force in their foreign-policy. Their concern for not creating favoritism or divisionism within the communities in making sure that no community is neglected is how they direct domestic and fiscal policy (Salmonelli 2005).

Donations and help from national and international civil society is not allowed to be earmarked to go to anyone in particular, to a specific community, or Autonomous Municipality. The Good Government Junta decides, after evaluating the circumstances of the communities, where that help most needs to be directed. The Good Government Junta imposes a "brother tax,"which is 10% of the total cost of a project, if a community, municipality or collective receives economic support for a project (Salmonelli 2005). In addition, surpluses or bonuses from the marketing of products from zapatista cooperatives and societies are given to the JBG in order to help those who cannot market their products or who do not receive any kind of aid (Salmonelli 2005).The objective is to balance the economic development of the communities in resistance (Subcommandante Marcos 2003; EZLN March 2006).

CHAPTER 3 MEXICAN HISTORY AND POLITICAL CULTURE

3.1 Mexican Political Culture

Political culture can be defined as "a set of beliefs, values and attitudes, norms and practices in which the citizens relate to the state, to political institutions and government authorities" (Dominguez 2001: 96). In this context then, Mexican political culture would be described as paternalistic, authoritarian and based on the believe in the "omnipotence" of a presidential system that concentrates power and provide goods and privileges (Dominguez 2001: 96-97; Peeler 1998). This authoritarian political culture encourages 'clientist' relations and passivity as well as a lack of information on citizens' rights, while neutralizing or punishing "critical attitudes or the search of alternatives." (Dominguez 2001: 96).

Through the Institutional Revolutionary Party(PRI), politics in Mexico have been *corporatist*, where Mexico has licensed and regulated religious, social, economic and popular organizations in order to effectively co-opt their leadership and circumscribe their ability to challenge state authority by establishing the state is the source of their legitimacy (Østerud 1997). Unlike *pluralism*, in which many groups must compete for control of the state, in corporatism, certain unelected bodies take a critical role in the decision-making process. In Mexico, corporatism has gone hand-in-hand with clientism, which can be defined as " the exchange of political rights for social benefits" (Hagene 2003). It is often associated with patron-clientism, a system of cliques based on personal connections and charismatic leadership. Today's Mexican political culture has been primarily molded by the previous centuries of corporatism and clientism through political strongman or *cuadillos.*

Caudillismo is a term which describes the cultural phenomenon that first appeared during the early 19th century in revolutionary South America,where charismatic and popular militia leaders or *caudillos* had enough influence to gain political control. Each leader had his supporters that he, in return for their loyalty, granted favors to (Weldon 1997 ; Harvey 1998). As with most other Latin

American countries, Mexico had a string of caudillos whose "prolonged hegemonies were punctuated by periods of instability, internal conflict, and external intervention"(Peeler 1998: 113)

Mexico' s caudillos have been typically concerned with their own power and success, and despite Mexico's revolutionary policy of no reelection, rarely retired; they held onto power until they were overthrown (Peeler 1998; Harvey 1998). Caudillos usually designated their successors and remained in power behind the scenes. This was the pattern for almost a 20 years of revolutionary struggles from 1910 to the 1930s (Peeler 1998).

Perhaps the most famous of the Mexican caudillos at the state level were Generale Antonio López Santa Anna, Porfirio Diaz, and General Plutarco Elias Calles (Peeler 1998). Santa Anna was quite possibly the most powerful general in Mexico in the 1820s and the main "arbiter of power in politics in Mexico" until 1855 (Peeler 1998: 114). "Santa Anna was above all concerned about his own power, and he neither limited corruption nor imposed order."(Peeler 1998: 114) The Santa Anna era was marked by struggles among elite factions who sought to "control the government for the material benefits they might derive"(Peeler 1998: 114).

After Santa Anna was overthrown by liberal forces in 1855, Benito Juárez, a Zapotec Indian, educated lawyer and previous Governor of Oaxaca became president of Mexico three years later. But a conservative revolt kept him out of Mexico until 1861. In 1867 Juárez was restored to power and remained president until his death in 1872. Although Benito Juárez ruled in the time of Caudillismo, he is not usually regarded as a caudillo. Unlike Santa, he "had a more substantial and largely positive legacy" and there was no particular evidence that he sought to enrich himself in office (Peeler 1998: 114-115).

Juárez imposed *La Reforma* (The Reform), which "established definitively

the legal equality of every citizen, an indispensable basis for liberal democracy." La Reforma was the first political project in Mexico to aspire to something like liberal democracy (Peeler 1998:115).

Porfirio Diaz, an influential and powerful liberal general challenged Juárez for the presidency in 1867 and 1871. He was elected president in 1876 and left office in 1880. However he returned in 1884 establishing a dictatorship that lasted until 1910, known as The *Porfiriato*. The Porfiriato significantly transformed Mexico by promoting a heaven for foreign investors and those with capital, while exploiting the most vulnerable sections of society, namely the indigenous and the poor (Peeler 1998: 115; Nash 2006).

The Porfiriato era was plagued with fraudulent elections, rule through "puppets" and clients, political repression, intimidation, and "brute force" (Peeler 1998: 115). During a revolutionary period beginning with the overthrow of Diaz in 1910, two regional caudillos, Emiliano Zapata in the Southwest and Pancho Villa in the north, raised basic demands of social justice such as agrarian reform. Urban and industrial workers demanded rights and benefits long denied by the Diaz regime and its business allies. The call for an "authentic" popular democracy was widely expressed. Most of these demands were embodied in the 1917 Constitution, though few were consistently implemented. "The gap between rhetoric and reality in the Mexican Revolution has always been wide" (Peeler 1998:116).

In 1920 civil war broke out again, the incumbent president Venustiano Carranza was assassinated and general Alvaro Obregon gained control and won the election. Plutarco Elias Calles, Obregon's successor, made it possible for Obregon to be reelected in 1928 through a constitutional amendment which lengthened the presidential term to six years and permitted reelection. Ironically Obregon was killed the day after his reelection (Peeler 1998).

From 1928 to 1934, Calles succeeded in installing several puppet presidents. He practiced traditional caudillismo, but he had developed an innovative instrument for carrying it out: the official Revolutionary party (Peeler 1998). On an official level, The National Revolutionary Party (PNR) was "intended to draw together the diverse strands of the revolutionary family to defend the revolution against counter revolutionary forces"(Peeler 1998: 118) The real agenda however was to monopolize control of the government in order to guarantee that PNR candidates would continue to win elections (Peeler 199).

Calles and his cronies had become an "incestuous clique of millionaires enriched by graft and plunder". The last of Calles's puppet presidents was Lazaro Cárdenas (1934-1940), who ironically worked to remove Calles allies from positions of influence and then forced him into exile in 1936 (Peeler 1998: 118). In the beginning of his presidency, his actions went according to the "script of caudillismo," but Cárdenas differed from other bosses in that he sought to rebuild popular support for the party with a series of popular but "controversial" measures including social welfare and security programs benefiting the workers, and the most extensive agrarian reform since 1910 (Peeler 1998: 118).

Cárdenas's reforms were though to be the "high watermark of revolutionary change in Mexico." He made sure that the party represented all major constituencies of the revolutionary coalition thus domesticated in them and assuring that they could be controlled by the top leadership (Peeler 1998: 118-119). What he did in retrospect was to de-personalize caudillosmo, and by doing so, removed the fundamental cause of instability in Mexican politics. (Peeler 1998:119).

Another fundamental change was that Cárdenas established the principle that presidents could serve for one six-year term without possibility for reelection. This made it very difficult for any single incumbent to take power in Mexico, as

did Diaz and Calles, although it did not prevent presidents from being "virtual dictator's" while in office, nor did it stifle their ability to designate their own successors (Peeler 1998:119; Gilbreth, Otero 2001: 8). Cárdenas's restructuring and reforms led Mexico to be among the most stable regimes in modern history and, by the same token, among "the most resistant to change" (Peeler 1998:119).

After Cárdenas, the Mexican political system entered a prolonged era of political stability, but it was by no means democratic. As recently as 2000, Mexico was described as a " semidemocratic political system (Semo1999 in Gilbreth and Otero 2001: 9)". Civil liberties were "usually" respected, and the media had broad, although not unlimited freedom, however there was political hegemony through the Institutional Revolutionary Party(PRI). The PRI "captured" virtually all elective offices (Peeler 1998:119). In addition the Mexican political system had failed to alternate power . They did this by allowing each outgoing president to choose his successor allowing the PRI to monopolize the executive years, successfully making Mexico single party state for more than 70 years (Gilbreth and Otero 2001).

Electoral fraud was institutionalized through the PRI, where presidential candidates were "handpicked" by the incumbent president and "ensured victory by use of electoral fraud when necessary" (Gilbreth Otero 2001; Peeler 1998: 119). The presidency dominated the judicial and legislative branches, while civil society was co-opted by mass organizations controlled by the state (Bartra and Otero 2005: 397; Callier and Quartello 2005:32-36).

3.1 Representative Democracy in Mexico

The Mexican government has been characterized as having an "exceptionally strong presidency." The Mexican president has more wide-ranging powers than any other country in Latin America. The president directs a "highly centralized federal system" in which states and municipalities ultimately appear to be subject

to the rule from the center (Weldon 1997: 225). The president initiates virtually all legislation, which is often passes swiftly through Congress. The president also has the ability to reform the Constitution by proposing amendments, which are frequently excepted by Congress with only "cosmetic changes." The president also has the power to veto legislation in its entirety or in part (Weldon 1997: 225).

The president designates his own successor to the presidency and also nominates most of the congressional candidates of his party. He also often names the candidates of the official party for governor. He can have governors, mayors, and members of the Congress removed from their post. Cabinet members are also chosen by the president and can be fired at the president's" leisure".. The federal judicial branch is filled with his own appointees, which leads to a "compliant judiciary" (Weldon 1997: 225)

Some scholars (Weldon 1997; Carpizo 1978) believe that the 1970 Constitution created a highly presidential system in order to create greater efficiency and stability in government. The the 18th 57 Constitution supposedly granted "too much power to the Congress in relation to the president, which led to later 19th century presidents to resort to "unconstitutional methods to strengthen their hand." For this reason they granted the president "extraordinary" constitutional powers. The nature of the presidency in Mexico today is viewed as an "unintended consequence" (Weldon 1997:227)

The PRI's main tool in assuring their political dominance, has been co-optation and rewarding groups and individuals for being loyal to the party. *Cooptation* has several definitions, but this paper uses co-optation to refer to the tactic of neutralizing or winning over a minority by assimilating them into the established group or culture (McLean 1996)

The state has had a history of oppressing those who dissent, while rewarding those who are loyal to the state (Bartra and Otero2005). For peasant

farmers in Mexico, the "tension between co-optation and rebellion has marked their history" (Bartra and Otero 2005: 388) In other words, when the state feared reprisals they awarded certain loyal groups and co-opted others through government organizations in order to keep divisions among the people, so they are fighting themselves and not the government (Zapatista NGO official L. 2006;Peeler 1998)

The hegemonic party system, authoritarian and repressive, gave autonomous organizations "little margin for action" (Dominguez 2001: 97), while governmental organizations like the National Peasant Confederation (CNC), and the Instituto Nacional Indígena (INI) were set up to co-opt and stifle peasant organizing and uprising, although doing little to actually better the situation for indigenous Mexicans (Johnston 2000). These institutionalized agents of the Mexican were designed as a substitute for autonomous peasant organizing. Repression, combined with the "privileged access" to state resources and the promise of land, allowed these groups to keep autonomous organizing at a minimum (Johnston 2000: 467).

Besides the "anti-democratic nature of corporatist control," the material gains of the revolution simply never arrived in regions like Chiapas. Campesinos in this state experienced minimal land reform; small-scale agricultural self-sufficiency was not created, and local power structures dominated by landowners and cattle ranchers remained intact (Johnston 2000: 467). By the 1970s, independent *campesino* organizers in Chiapas found that groups like the CNC world not only unable to help them, but they were "actively participating in their repression" (Johnston 2000: 467)

Co-optation through the PRI even included rewarding smaller leftist parties for participating in elections in order to enhance the legitimacy of the elections process. Because most parties were co-opted, opposition parties were "rather

insignificant" until 1978, when there were only four legally recognized political parties. Of these four, two had considered the same presidential candidates as the PRI in various elections. These parties were seen as "minor appendages of the ruling party." Only the National Action Party (PAN) represented a serious opposition, but was rarely victorious (Peeler 1998;Gilbreth and Otero 2001:8).

3.2 The Mexican State and Indigenous people

Through the different political eras in Mexico the indigenous population have been the most vulnerable and exploited sector of society. Indigenous people in Mexico have been oppressed for over 500 years by Spanish colonials, and later Mestizo ranchers and plantation owners . They have been enslaved, suffered indentured servantry, and been on the recieving end of extreme racism (Fray Bartolome 2006; Collier and Quaratiello 2005). Throughout the entire colonial period the Spanish government viewed Indians as subordinates whom were "less than fully adults" (Collier and Quaratiello 2005: 21).

In Chiapas, which didn't join Mexico until 1824, the patterns of enslavement and indentured servantry lasted even longer than in other regions. Indigenous people in Chiapas were an exploitable labor force for the timber and coffee industries, and were brought to "virtual servitude" because of debts to the company stores(Rus 2001;Collier and Quaratiello 2005: 25).

Although the Mexican Republic officially abolished indigenous peoples' "categorically inferior" status in the post-colonial period (beginning in 1821), their *de facto* subordination continues even today, as indigenous people are still treated as second-class citizens by the Mexican government (Collier and Quaratiello 2005: 23). The traditional practices, worldviews, philosophies, and native languages of the Mexican indigenous people are judged to be inferior and backward in the eyes of dominant Mexican society (Collier and Quaratiello 2005;Chiapas State Official: Education Dept. 2006).

Indigenismo

State policy in the 19th-century attempted to exterminate its indigenous people both statistically and physically, so as to construct for homogenously white nationstate (Bartra and Otero 2005: 392). The Mexican states pursue a policy of "integration" or the altogether abandonment of indigenous cultures in favor of adopting the dominant mestizo culture (Bartra and Otero 2005: 392). This process of acculturation became known as indigenism or *indigenismo* (Bartra and Otero 2005: 393)

Although the political presence of indigenous peoples was "diluted" through Indigenismo, indigenous people began to organize around their demands for autonomy, self-governance and democracy in the 20th century. Indigenous people demanded control over land and territory but wanted at the same time to remain an important and "dignified" part of the Mexican nation state. The 20th century gave way to the promotion of cultural and educational activities to recover the indigenous languages and culture. Land, liberty and dignity became integrated in a sort of indigenous socialism, a "Mayan utopia" (Bartra and Otero 2005: 392).

In the 1940s, efforts at providing indigenous people with a real sense of belonging and empowerment were co-opted by the state's National Indigenist Institute (INI) which sought to rescue indigenous culture as "folklore," overlooking the demand for identity and the rights that emanate from it (Bartra and Otero 2005: 393).

The 1970's and 1980's gave rise to a large indigenous movement in Mexico involving many groups including campesinos, women, mestizos, and the indigenous poor. These groups demanded equal rights and the end to government oppression. At least two decades of passive resistance led some groups within the movement to take up arms. Several communities in central and western Mexico

rose up in defense of land, forests and water, and against *caciques* (political and economic strongmen) and municipal governments. In the struggles the main issue centered around land and their demands for it (Bartra and Otero 2005). Indigenous people in Latin America view land and the control of its resources as one of the collective rights that guarantees the cultural and "social survival" of peoples (Mindiola 2006: 1) [1]

Transition to Indianism

During the 1980s in the 1990s many independent regional organizations emerged throughout Mexico, leading to an massive meetings and encounters which built solidarity, strengthened identities, and developed leadership. By the end of the 1980s the "indigenous agenda" or *Indianism* had been clearly defined: the right to autonomy and self-determination, the right to land and natural resources, the right to "freely determine internal political condition of communities", in agreement with traditional forms of organization and "the prevalence of traditional customary rights (Bartra and Otero 2005: 397)

The decade of the 1990s was a period in which the cultural diversity and Indigenous peoples' rights "became quite relevant in Mexico" (Moreno 2005: 7). In 1990, Articles 16 and 25 of the State Constitution were amended, recognizing the plural character of the state based on the presence of its Indigenous peoples and the need to respect the traditions and democratic practices of Indigenous communities. In 1990 Mexico ratified the Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) on the rights of Indigenous peoples and two years later,

1 This demand for land originates in colonial times when the system of *encomiendas*, land granted by the Spanish crown, (1523-1531) laid the basis for the exploitation of the indigenous population. Many indigenous people lost their permanent land-base, were forced to resettle to other locations, or were wiped out by European diseases (Stephen 2002). During La Reforma under Jaurez, indigenous communal property was undermined once again, and the the groundwork was laid for a "massive concentration of land"(Peeler 1998:115). But this was minor compared to the Porfiriato period, where foreign and national entrepreneurs were encouraged to take advantage of laws designed to free up land, labor, and natural resources (Collier and Quaratiello 2005). Large commercial plantations took over lands from indigenous communities and small holders, creating a growing class of landless peasants (Peeler 1998:115).

Article 4 of the Federal Constitution was reformed to formally recognize the multiethnic character of the nation (Moreno Jaimes 2006). With these constitutional and legal reforms, Oaxaca placed itself at the "vanguard of the recognition of indigenous rights" (Moreno Jaimes 2006: 7). In Oaxaca the 1990s, there was approval of different pieces of legislation in education, administration of justice, and the electoral code which formally recognized indigenous rights in the state (Moreno Jaimes 2006).

San Andrés Accords

On January 1996 San Cristobal de Las Casas, the First National Indigenous Forum was held and attended by 757 indigenous delegates, 403 journalists, 248 guests, and 568 observers. And in October of 1996 the first National Indigenous Congress (CNI) was constituted in Mexico City. In the same year, the Indigenous Bill of Rights was drawn up. This compilation of laws and stipulations came to be known as the San Andrés Accords, and it was the culmination of nearly 2 years of work by activists, popular leaders, academics, and indigenous people from all over Mexico (EZLN 2006).

The San Andrés Accords, drafted in part with the cooperation of the EZLN and the Peace and Conciliation Commission (COCOPA), called for (1) respect for the “diversity” of indigenous communities, (2) “greater participation” of these peoples in making decisions and spending public monies, and (3) “autonomy of indigenous communities and their right of free determination” within the law (Grayson 2001: 1). The accords also stipulated the adoption of the following principles: Pluralism, self-determination, sustainability, consultation and accord, strengthening of the federal system and democratic decentralization; as well is requesting various constitutional and legal reforms (San Andrés Accords 1996)

The drafters of the Accords worked rigorously to come up with a broad-based compilation of laws and stipulations which every major indigenous organization could agree upon, and with the broadest spectrum of representation. The labors of these dedicated people together with the series of negotiations between the Zapatistas and Mexican government led to the creation and signing by both parties of the accords in 1996 (EZLN 2006).

3.3 Indigenous Exclusion in Politics

Mexico is an integral part of Latin America,which is categorized as one of the most unequal regions in the world, which has translated into exclusion for the most vulnerable sectors of society, namely the indigenous people (Nash 2001; Mindiola 2006; O'Dso that Mexico isonnell 1993). Explanations for this imbalance are complex and varied from country to country, but among them, the impact of economic adjustment policies (the World Bank), the weakness of state institutions, and the "interdependence between the manner in which the nation-state formation process was carried out" have considerably restricted development capacities, and governability in Latin America (Mindiola 2006:2 ; O'Donnell 1993).

The socioeconomic crisis facing Latin America is characterized by various phenomena, but two factors are fundamentally important: 1) the fragility of the state, and 2) the inability of political systems to generate spaces for dialogue and negotiation among political stakeholders (Mindiola 2006). Various states have difficulty in fulfilling their basic functions such as political stability, rule of law, and control of violence. States' are incapable of preventing corruption and "particularism" in the distribution of goods and services (Mindiola 2006:2). This pattern is especially apparent in Mexico, as has been described in section 3.1.

According to Mindiola, "[t]he combination of both phenomena has

prevented the achievements of the democratization process from moving beyond formal terrain, and resulted in scant improvement for the Indigenous population in real terms in the past 25 years" (Mindiola 2006:3).

Although many Latin American countries, including Mexico have ratified legal texts and constitutions which recognize indigenous rights (see San Andrés Accords, usos y costumbres), this has "not necessarily translated into new equilibriums regarding these disparities or an expansion of citizenship to Indigenous populations"(Mindiola 2006:3). One of the reasons for this is that political institutions have not managed to create adequate spheres of "real" participation where Indigenous groups might be effectively represented in the state as valid "interlocutors" (Mindiola 2006:3).

The lack of representation of indigenous peoples in state politics has led these groups to be dissatisfied with the decision-making process (EZLN 2006; Mindiola 2006). This frustration of being left out of important decisions which profoundly effect their lives together with a loss of self-determination, and deteriorating quality of life as a consequence of economic globalization has led to an emergence of social movements in Mexico and throughout Latin America (Nash 2001; Mindiola 2006)

These popular movements started a process of "indigenous emergence", which has led to increasing visibility of Indigenous peoples as "social and political stakeholders, and demands for recognition of their distinct identities and their right to political participation"(Mindiola 2006:3). Indigenous popular movements are becoming an important external pressure on state governments to democratize. By engaging civil society indigenous peoples are changing the political culture in Latin America, and are presenting new alternatives to the current process of institution building (Eber 2006; Bartra Otero 2005).

Ironically , among the different types of people of the world, indigenous

people seem to be the best equipped for finding alternatives to the capitalist/ neoliberal ideology because they do not share in the notions of capitalist expansion and thus often retain unique worldviews (Nash 2001).
Indigenous people can give pointers on how new democracies can more effectively reform states to accommodate plural identities (Mindiola 2006).

The state reforms that indigenous movements envision imply a "significant deviation" from the traditional nation-state model and the notions of democracy and citizenship (Mindiola 2006:3). One of the key elements of indigenous governance is the self-determination of peoples, "of which the practical expression is autonomy (not separatism) based on a regulatory system that organizes the social life." (Mindiola 2006:1)

3.4 Indigenous Autonomy

In the 1960s 1970s, the term "independent" became the symbol of democratic position i.e. "independent peasant unions", "independent conferences" of indigenous organizations. Although independent from the PRI, however, these organizations could still be, and often were, politically subordinate to an opposition organization like the Mexican Communist Party (PCM). These organizations were still lacking " autonomy "(Bartra and Otero 2005: 390)

The last quarter of the century autonomy became the buzzword and the "rallying cry" among oppositional and popular democratic organizations. The concept of autonomy became more generalized around 1984 when about 50 rural organizations, who's members were primarily of indigenous origin, constituted themselves into the national Union of Autonomous Regional Peasant Organizations (Bartra and Otero 2005: 391).

Although the word independence and the term autonomy are virtually synonyms, rejecting political subservience, autonomy was more associated with

social and economic self-management of peasant and cooperative production. Thus "autonomous" peasants rejected the guardianship of the state and set out to" appropriate the productive process"(self-management) while neighborhoods and communities organized around the self managing provision of basic services like schooling and security (Bartra and Otero 2005: 391).

The idea for autonomy for indigenous peoples goes even more beyond organizational independence and economic self-management, it means free self-determination; that is self-government at the community level, according to their own norms, practices and customs (usos y custumbres). Indigenous peoples see demands for autonomy as an ancestral right that precedes the current national state. In a sense, this claim is external to the hegemonic social system which exists in Mexico today (Bartra and Otero 2005:391).

In the transition from political independence to social economic self-management and into self-government, the underlying concept of autonomy sharpened its connotation of otherness, of an alternative, popular democratic and multicultural project. Autonomy has become what Bartra and Otero call an "anti-systematic practice" by which the oppressed resist by constructing alternative organizational orders (Bartra and Otero 2005:392).

Indigenous autonomy is a very slow process and progresses in many different stages. It is the process of "overcoming and conservation of stages" where each new stage contains and retains progress from previous stages. In the case of Mexico, indigenous autonomy has moved from "unanimous and monolithic politics towards a form of depoliticized self-management and then towards the demand for multicultural world were all worlds fit" (Bartra and Otero 2005:392)

So, we see that this form of self-governance is not an invention or contribution of the EZLN. It comes from further back in time. At the time of the

formation of the EZLN , the foundations for indigenous autonomy and self-governance had already been in place. Indigenous autonomous projects had already been operating for a while, although only at the community level, through building clinics and pharmacies (with the help of civil society) and training health workers (Subcommondante Marcos 2004).

The existence and permanence of the de facto autonomies in Chiapas have been directly associated with the history of the region and especially the history of the absence and inefficiency of the Mexican state (Cal y Mayor 2005; Van Der Haar 2005). This is especially in terms of agrarian reform following the 1917 constitution after the time for the revolution. Campesinos confiscated lands in order to oblige the government to give them titles. Lack of institutions which granted them land led to de facto autonomy at the cost of many dead and many arrested. The state was militarily oppressive (Cal y Mayor 2005) On the other hand the lack of the state to oversee the development of de facto autonomy's allowed them to live clandestinely in the 1970s and 1980s. Numerous NGOs helped with providing education and health services to the most impoverished areas where the state was both absent and inefficient. Most of them were financed through the Catholic Church. In the jungle and highlands areas and in the north they implemented projects of health, education production and commercialization through "promoteres" or promoters, local indigenous people which were trained for various specializations such as education and medicine, an order to assist their community members The weakness of the state in this area also made it possible for social mobilization(Cal y Mayor 2005: 243; EZLN 2006).

The 1990s saw an era of self-government through *ejid's* which was allowed by the corporate relations of the state with rural society, in or to secure political stability for the PRI in the area. This allowed indigenous communities to live with their own authorities, mediates with their own mechanisms. There are various

autonomous projects, de facto, in Chiapas that are different in their extension and their functions and they don't always coincide with each other, quite the contrary sometimes they compete (Cal y Mayor 2005; Van Der Haar 2005).

3.5 Neoliberalism in Mexico

In the words of EZLN spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos, Mexican social policy

"The national economy ceased being one some time ago [...] business is monopolized by large transnational companies, the banks are saturated with foreign capital and the ups and downs of financial speculation are driven by global, not national, variables" (Subcomandante Marcos August 2004).

Neoliberalism has ultimately converted Mexico into what Joseph Nef calls a “receiver state,” or a state "whose power is reduced primarily in the areas of social provision and the social regulation of capital "(Vadi 2001: 129). Receivers states align themselves "forcefully" with foreign capital and with domestic interests that have liquid assets (Vadi 2001: 129). Mexico's role as a receiver state has been further deepened by the accumulation of foreign debt from neoliberal institutions during the 1982 debt crisis, which has in turn increased Mexico's dependency on foreign markets and economic globalization (Collier, Collier 2005). On a material level, this has contributed to the lowering of living standards as well as lack of social provision. Politically, it has paved the pathway in which Mexico will follow in the decades to come.

Mexico's dependency on international financial institutions has forced its compliance with the ideals set by the Bretton Woods institutions, which do not seem to value political, social and human rights beyond " their instrumental role" in economic and socioeconomic development, which is expected to be furthered by open markets and a "subsidiary state" (Demmers 2004: 8). This can be confirmed in the fact that, despite the growing international and national inequalities brought on by the policies of the Bretton Woods institutions, they still pursue policies that hurt the most vulnerable sectors of society. The World Bank

for example has chosen a policy of taxation which, instead of requiring governments to collect "easily collected taxes, " or taxes on international trade and taxes on large firms, the World Bank proposes adding taxes on consumption and public services, "something which largely comes at a cost to citizens "(Demmers 2004:10).

Another example is the fact that, it in order to make economies attractive for foreign investors, the Bretton Woods institutions oppose the standard minimum wage and labor unions. But, perhaps most importantly, these institutions continue to promote their agenda for "global free markets" in international politics despite mounting evidence showing the increasing inequalities and negative social implications of the global free market (Demmers 2004:10)

Perhaps the greatest example for Mexico's subservience to the Bretton Woods institutions is the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994. By disbanding credits and infrastructural supports for *campesino* agriculture, and by phasing out price supports under the terms of NAFTA the government appeared willing to sacrifice rural producers to unfair competition from imported and subsidized crops from the United States and Canada (Collier, Collier 2005; Stephen 2002) .

NAFTA has drastically reduced (and will soon eliminate) most tariffs on agricultural goods traded among Mexico, Canada, and the United States. As a result, Mexico has been flooded by U.S. products (such as corn and pork) that cost one-fifth as much to produce (Rafael Tamayo-Flores 2001; Stephen 2002). This has created a major crisis for millions of Mexican farmers (Rafael Tamayo-Flores 2001; Collier, Collier 2005; O'Malley et.al 1998).

Political involvement and social movements have increased in the past decade in response to the neoliberal development model. Among these social movements the indigenous people, of whom the majority are rural subsistence

farmers, are becoming some of the most vocal, as they are the ones to bare the worst brunt of neoliberal policies like NAFTA (Nash 2006).

CHAPTER 4 THE ZAPATISTA UPRISING

In the early hours of the new year, the general command of Zapatista Liberation Army (EZLN) issued the *First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* and over 4000 indigenous people, many armed with nothing but pitchforks and sticks, and wearing black ski masks and bandannas on their faces, stormed the municipalities of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Chanal, Oxchuc, and Huixtan, Chiapas demanding "democracy, liberty, and justice for all Mexicans"(EZLN 1994).

According to Collier NAFTA was not the cause of the Zapatista uprising, but" the rebellion's timing and course reflect global processes"(Collier, Collier 2005: 451). [2] Its principal causes of the rebellion lie in the 1980s when the world's financial planners mandated austerity (reduction in national government spending to pay back creditors). The reduction in social services required by the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Policies (SAP) stimulated political opposition which the Mexican government met by increasing militarization (CONAPAZ 1997; Collier, Collier 2005).

The tensions were heightened in 1992 when President Salinas de Gortari put an end to the 27th Amendment of the Mexican Constitution, which in effect dissolved all previous land claims that had not yet been resolved, and prevented any new claims on land (Collier & Quaratiello 2005) The decision to end the agrarian reform and to allow privatization of agrarian resources that previously had been treated as 'social property' not only angered *campesino* groups with

2 See June Nash (2001) who asserts that electronic communication and media can provide a global arena for protests that might never have been broadcast a few decades ago (2001: 20)

unresolved land claims but "threatened to open the countryside to exploitation by transnational agribusiness" (Collier, Collier 2005: 452).

Another factor causing public dissent was the lack of state social provision. Many state programs for education and housing, health and development never really reached Chiapas. These marginalized people however had been promised that such distributed services would reach them "someday". Their hopes were crushed with economic restructuring. Even as declining real incomes plunged nearly 50% of the Mexican population below the poverty line, austerity dismantled or guided many public services (Collier, Collier 2005:452). Those few resources that did reach Chiapas were often distributed in "partisan fashion to reward government supporters and punish opponents", further exasperating the gap between rich and poor *campesinos* that had been increasing due to unequal opportunities for supplementing *campesino* production with off farm income (Collier, Collier 2005: 453).

It is no accident that the Zapatistas chose January 1, 1994 as the date that they would rise up. They were fully aware that the signing of NAFTA would be a major media event drawing the audience of millions of people from around the world. The Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) entered the international scene as a way of stating the presence of indigenous peoples in the middle of a globalized world (Nash 2001). They declared war on the Mexican government, and denounced the new neoliberal policies that were to take effect that very day (EZLN 1994). There were armed clashes in Chiapas between the Mexican army and the EZLN, which ended with a cease-fire two weeks after the uprising. The Mexican government has not launched a full-scale confrontation since. Instead, the Mexican government pursues a policy of “low-intensity warfare” using military intimidation and violent acts by para-military groups in an attempt to control the rebellion(Holloway and Paleaz 1998).

The Zapatista Movement Today

Currently there is a military stalemate the Mexican government Zapatistas because neither side can afford to attack. Zapatista principles do not allow them to surrender and lay down their weapons (see discussion in next section), but they are outnumbered by the government troops. Mexico's pressure to abide by the international conventions on human rights, however, constrain their ability to use covert military violence. The Zapatistas have been able to mobilize international sympathy, and the government fears that having to fight a "genocidal war insures that any attack could turn into a public-relations nightmare"(Collier, Collier 2005: 456)

There is also a political stalemate, where the government has declared the Zapatista autonomous municipalities illegal, and the Zapatistas refuse to return to negotiations. Interestingly, the Mexican state is "counterattacking" them by establishing new municipalities that of their own design. The government refused to ratify the San Andreas accords, however president Zedillo urged Chiapas's governors to write their own legislator and laws on indigenous rights and culture despite "vocal opposition from minority parties" Whereas the San Andreas accords called for the government to recognize the rights of indigenous 'peoples' the governor's laws "granted" rights to indigenous communities(Collier, Collier 2005: 457)

The military and political stalemate in Chiapas has rendered at least half of the state ungovernable and therefore unwelcome to transnational capital. The state is ungovernable because of internal frictions and paramilitary violence. This began with PRI support of paramilitary groups groups to harass Zapatista support base communities. Most of these communities have been divided into opposing factions by economic processes in the 1980s, where wealth was "dependent on

cultivating PRI officials rather than on wooing local followers". As a result the government found allies, many of whom were already acquiring arms on their own, ready to participate in a low intensity war to break down the Zapatista rebellion and their support bases (observation 2006; EZLN 2006; Collier, Collier 2005: 457)

Social provision of the government also continues to be low, and nonexistent in many areas of Chiapas, especially in the poorest regions where Zapatista support is the strongest (observation 2006; Collier, Collier 2005). The Zapatistas have prohibited their supporters from accepting government money (EZLN 2006). And although Zapatistas welcome help from NGOs, the PRI government had mounted an anti-foreigner campaign that made it very difficult, if not impossible for foreigners and any sympathetic Mexicans to help build schools and hospitals that the Zapatista communities need. Luckily this anti-foreigner campaign has subsided a bit since the late 1990s when it was launched, and when I was there in 2006, I saw little evidence of international NGOs being prohibited from helping the Zapatistas. Some local NGOs do however, fear paramilitary reprisal for helping the Zapatistas (observation 2006, Chiapas NGO official1 and 2 2006). According to many, the Zapatistas have also contributed to, rather than restrained, the militarization in the region (Collier, Collier 2005; Chiapas NGO official1 2006).

CHAPTER 5 THE NEW ZAPATISTA MOVEMENT

Armed with Weapons and Words

The Zapatistas are often portrayed as a social movement, distinct from a truly revolutionary guerilla struggle. Like other popular armed movements in Latin America (i.e.EPR), the Zapatista movement began with a goal of the dissolution or restructuring of the existing government institutions, but the Zapatista way of

doing things is fundamentally different than other Latin American armed movements in many ways. The most obvious being that the Zapatistas did not aim to overthrow the government (Johnston 2001; Bruhn 1999). although the movement initially called for the dissolution of the federal government and/or restructuring of its oppressive institutions, the Zapatistas did not vie to take power. On the contrary, the Zapatista movement acknowledges the importance of state government, and do not wish to weaken state sovereignty by breaking apart from the state (interview 2006 Oventic)

Although the Zapatistas are indeed armed and have no intention of laying down their weapons, the EZLN has engaged in a war of "ideas not bullets." In this war, the EZLN used words as weapons to prevent its own military destruction, to attract resources, and to build a broad coalition of mostly non-state allies to pressure the Mexican government for resolution of its demands-primarily the implementation of the San Andrés accords.

Though the EZLN's has the capability to use continued violence through terrorism and bombs, which would cause fairly serious problems because Chiapas generates about half the nation's electricity supply, it has chosen to use non-violent tactics such as peace marches and dialogue with national and international media to further its cause (Bruhn 1999).

Just 12 days after declaring war, the EZLN excepted a ceasefire to which it adhered for four years; although the EZLN believed armed uprising was necessary, they used violence cautiously in the initial miltary attacks, and since the cease-fire, have vigorously supported non-violent, educational tools of struggle to achieve their objectives without bloodshed, and had even deliberately refused to respond violently when provoked by the Mexican military and paramilitary groups. (Johnston 2001; Bruhn 1999).

The EZLN uses most of their time and effort on building solidarity, not

only among local indigenous communities and Mexican civil society, but also internationally. They do this primarily through international and local media campaigns, mostly by way of communiqués, interviews, and other media events such as the peace marches mentioned above. They also use the Internet quite extensively.

Their campaigns have a high success rate because they address groups in a discourse that most people can relate to. Their *communiqués* tend to focus on satire and humor, and mainstream themes and symbols that are easily embraced by civil society and the international community (Bruhn 1999). The EZLN stresses concepts like peace, justice, and democracy while steering away from leftist ideologies like Marxism and Leninism used by other traditional guerrilla groups like the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR). They try to promote solidarity in the media by addressing their audiences in terms of identity-i.e. ethnicity, gender-as opposed to class struggle. (Bruhn 1999). Perhaps the most appealing to their audiences is the fact that the EZLN's admits that it does not have "the" only answer, and only calls for a broad "solidarity with all those who, in general, are against the penetration of neoliberal capitalism in the lives of all people; or in other words, support for uniqueness in a global economy" (Bruhn 1999: 27).

The new Zapatista movement also has a link between the unique and often hard to understand indigenous worldview and the Western worldview: Subcommandante Marcos. Marcos, a nonindigenous Mexican whose identity is disguised behind a ski mask, serves as a important link between indigenous society and the Mexican civil society at large. Marcos' charisma and intellectuality makes him appealing as a media figure. However his humbleness, adaptability and open-mindedness allows him to bridge the gap between the indigenous and western world views (Bruhn 1999; Gilbreth and Otero 2001).

The evidence does suggest that words are indeed the Zapatistas most

important weapon. Johnston however rejects the assertion that the Zapatistas are "merely a social movement, not to be confused with a 'real' guerrilla army." He asserts that those who participated in the 1994 uprising made international headlines "only because they chose guns over unarmed protest" (Johnston 2000:46) Even so, the Zapatistas' armed struggle was fought on the level of a Gramscian "war of position."[3] The rebels did not aim to take over the centers of government, but instead sought to capture the "hearts and minds" of Mexican civil society in order to rearrange power relations at a more profound level. The Zapatistas hoped to use military means to "catalyze" the formation of a new historic bloc, comprising new democratic ideas, institutions, and "equitable material strategies" (Johnston 2000:465)

The Zapatistas are trying to change the way both local and national government is run without toppling the existing regime and taking power. They are working with civil society, organizing at the grassroots level, and a working on making structural changes from the bottom to the top.

The Zapatistas believe that a real revolution could not occur through a change in the reigns of power, but must involve long-term change at the level of individual consciousness, state institutions, material structures, and civil society (Bruhn 1999; Holloway 2002; EZLN 2006).

The Zapatista movement embodies what MacEwan calls a non-reformist-reform or revolutionary reforms which "advance toward a radical transformation of society [... and] bases the possibility of attaining its objective on the

[3] Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci contemplated the nature of revolutionary change, and saw a historical shift in strategy occurring from the 'war of movement' to the 'war of position'. In a war of movement, a ruling group seizes control of the state, as in the Cuban Revolution. Gramsci believed that a war of movement was less feasible in the democracies of Western Europe, and saw possibilities opening up through a war of position that targets ideas, attitudes, the state, and civil society. In a war of position, counter-hegemonic organizations merge together to form a new historic bloc and build up the social foundations of a new state. The goal is to build a broad counter-hegemony, while resisting co-optation by more powerful hegemonic forces. This is an admittedly slow and onerous task, requiring effective political organization capable of organizing new groups of working classes, and building bridges between peasants and urban marginals

implementation of fundamental political and economic changes" (MacEwan 1999: 15). In other words they assume structural reforms. In the case in Mexico, political and economic reforms have been limited to *reformism*, which "rejects those objectives and demands-however deep the need for them-which are incompatible with the preservation of the system" (McEwan 1999:18). According to MacEwan participation is key to having lasting revolutionary changes. He asserts that,

"even where significant political democracy exists, and certainly where it does not, maintenance of the status quo depends upon people being excluded from involvement in the [political and] economic decisions that affect their lives and in the formulation and implementation of economic policy. Regardless of the content of reforms, if the method of reform does not challenge the alienation of most people from control over their [political and] economic lives, it's positive democratic implications will be limited" (McEwan 1999:18).

The Zapatista movement challenges the status quo by striving to include virtually everyone in the political decision-making process in order to guarantee for the greatest possible participation.

Johnston argues that the Zapatista movement demonstrates how the lines between democracy and violence are blurred in the context of globalization, and the related phenomenon of low-intensity warfare and low intensity democracy. Johnston states that "clearly the Zapatistas should be differentiated from those using more violent methods of guerilla warfare," but suggests because they are armed "the Zapatistas cannot serve as exemplars for peaceful protest" (Johnston 2000:465), The Zapatistas themselves are well aware of the contradiction between an armed movement, peace and democratic reforms. This contradiction was a major reason why Zapatistas departed from the armed EZLN to an unarmed governing body; the Junta of Good Government, which is where the focus will now turn (Johnston 2000; EZLN 2006).

The Birth of The Junta of Good Government

The areas of Zapatistas control are largely made up of extremely poor rural indigenous communities, of which communities of a dozen to over 100 families

are typical. They live off the land without the benefit of modern agricultural machinery, and some of the men have to work outside the village in local towns or even as far as the USA to send back remittances to their families (Zapatista citizen E February 2006). Of course, isolated from the rest of Chiapas, a good number of indigenous communities have been living in de facto autonomy according to their own customs long before the Zapatistas demanded the Mexican government to allow them autonomy under the law (Collier 2005;.Van Der Haar 2005) . However in many villages, the only political presence tended to come from the Catholic church's "liberation theology" and the EZLN itself (Flood 1999:1). Prior to the rebellion many communities did not have sufficient fertile land and community members had to work, often under horrible conditions, for local landowners. The rebellion caused many landowners to flee in fear, and in many cases their abandoned land was taken over and used to establish new communities (Zapatista citizen G, E., J. Feb. 2006).

In 1998 the Zapatista support bases decided to construct Zapatista Autonomous Rebel Municipalities (MAREZ) in order to put into effect the *de facto* autonomy of the San Andrés Accords that the federal government refused to implement. All of the MAREZ are unique in that some of them have only one ethnic identity and others have pleural ethnic identities including the different groups who speak a different Mayan languages (Tzeltal, Tzotzil, Tojolobal, and Choles), but some municipalities are made up of both indigenous and *mestizos* (observation las Tacitas 2006; Cal y Mayor 2005). They don't have one single constitution, besides the San Andrés Accords, for "general political principles which orientate the practical politics of the members [my translation]." The municipalities are dynamic and constantly changing, which means that the Zapatistas have to constantly be adapting their rhetoric and their policies to include even greater numbers and to satisfy their members. One principle that

they do have in common however in Zapatista lands is the principle of ‘governing by obeying’. Governing by obeying, which pre-dates the Zapatista presence in Chiapas, is one by which authorities are monitored carefully by the community and recalled and replaced when necessary (EZLN January 2006). This philosophy is used in addition to their traditional form of direct democracy which had been used at the community level since ancient times (JBG March 2006).

There was an enormous growth of the EZLN in the late 1980s and 1990s, which led the practice of governing by obeying to move from the local to the regional level. Functioning with local ‘responsables’ (that is, those in charge of the organization in each community), regional ones (a group of communities) and area ones (a group of regions), the EZLN saw that in this traditional philosophy of governing by obeying, those who did not discharge their duties were, "in a natural fashion, replaced by another." The EZLN copied this model but, given that they area political-military organization, the general command made the final decision on removal of authorities and such (JBG Jan. 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003:1).

Up until 2003 the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee, (CCRI) had jurisdiction over the communities. Regionally it was capable of making decisions that affected individual communities. For instance when one community in the region of Morelia wanted to occupy land shortly after the rebellion the local CCRI ordered locals to wait, expecting a region-wide land settlement after the 1994 dialogues between the EZLN in the state government (McCaughan 1996). The CCRI is composed of delegates from the communities, but is in itself not a military structure. However they had jurisdiction over the different MAREZ, which often resulted in military members being a part of the associations and decisions of the local civil governments in the communities. In the EZLN's own words, their military "contaminated" a tradition of democracy and self-

governance. The EZLN was one of the "undemocratic" elements in a relationship of direct community democracy which had been operating a "good while" before the EZLN was born (Subcommandante Marcos 2003:1). In order to fix this problem of military contamination in civil government they created a new organization, with civil structures and political military structures separated (Cal y Mayor 2005: 251).

The "death" of the four Aguascalientes the EZLN had built, and the "birth" of Caracoles in Rebellion and the new civil government, the Junta of Good Government, commenced on August 8 2003 to commemorate the first Aguascalientes built on August 8, 1994 for the first national Democratic convention. This transition directed all domestic and foreign policies through the JBG not the command of the EZLN. They also made it so that the EZLN does not intervene at all in the designation or removal of autonomous authorities, and it has "limited itself to only pointing out that, given that the EZLN, by principle, is not fighting for the taking of power", none of the military command or members of the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee are allowed to occupy a position of authority in the community or in the Autonomous Municipalities. Those who decide to participate in the autonomous governments must "definitively resign" from their position within the EZLN(Subcommandante Marcos 2003:1). Now the CCRI's main function is to command the EZLN in each region and serve as a type of checks and balances by monitoring the operations of the Good Government Juntas in order to prevent acts of corruption, intolerance, injustice and deviation from the zapatista principle of governing by obeying (Subcommandante Marcos 2003; Cal y Mayor 2005).

CHAPTER 6 THE FAILURES OF PRESIDENTIAL DEMOCRACY

Peeler (1998: 189) asserts that "liberal democracy is the best system yet invented for protecting people from abuse by the government." No other system does it

better over a sustained period, and it provides mechanisms for pursuit of the common good (Peeler 1998).

In theory, the doctrines of liberal democracy promote freedom and are against the concentration of power in just a few hands, whether those hands are economical (monopolies) or political (strong states). However, Mexico's liberal democracy has not been successful at limiting the concentration of corporate power (Demmers et al. 2004). In fact, quite the opposite is true, it has fostered the concentration of power. Policies for open markets have allowed market players to gain "freedom at the cost of citizens' political influence" (Demmers et al. 2004: 11).

Peeler does acknowledge that Mexico has not met the criteria of a liberal democracy. And it seems highly unlikely that Mexico will ever reach the criteria (Hogenboom 2004). Though changing focus in 2000, Mexico's authoritarian political culture based on clientism and corporatism and corrupt politicians that are primarily concerned with enriching themselves and their corporate interest seems to be a lasting legacy (Hogenboom 2004). Mexico's dependence on the Bretton Woods institutions has led to austerity, which has contributed to the overall impoverishment of Mexican citizens. However, even if Mexico did live up to the standards of other liberal democracies in Latin America, they could possibly establish a stable regime (Peeler 1998), but this does not necessarily mean that it will be a social democracy.

When one looks at liberal democracy in terms of promoting social democracy, there is evidence of flaws which go deeper than merely bad governing practices (Demmers et.al 2004). Of course the underlying economic global system is at fault for much of this, but the representative aspect of liberal democracy, of which is presidentialism in the majority of Latin American countries, provides an easy vehicle for implementing the global economic agenda. The the lack of mechanisms (combined with the inability or unwillingness of representatives) to

include the general electorate in decisions concerning their socioeconomic and political lives has led to marginalization, frustration, and ultimately violence and social unrest (Mindiola 2006; Shutt 2001). It is logical to assume then, that if representative democracy's goal was to mitigate these problems (which seems the purpose of democracy), it should include mechanisms which foster inclusion in this area. The next section will discuss in detail the flaws which make representative democracy incapable of this task.

Failures of Presidential Democracy

Many scholars have argued that the presidential form of government has been a major contributor to the "travails of democracy in Latin America in recent years." This argument has been widely accepted and there are few published counter arguments (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997: 12). The failure of presidential democracies in Latin America has led many scholars to assert that perhaps parliamentary regimes would fare better (Linz and Valenzuela 1994). Although this is a very important point, it is not within the scope of this paper to give a detailed analysis of why a parliamentarian government will not fare any better in Mexico than a presidential system. For a detailed account and critique of this see Mainwaring and Shugart (1997) and Linz and Valenzuela (1994). It can be conferred with a review of neoliberalism and liberal democracy, that neither system fosters inclusion and participation in decision-making processes. However, since Mexico is a presidential democracy as is the majority of Latin American countries, this paper has chosen to focus more on the presidential aspect of representative democracy. So when the terms 'representatives' and 'representative' is used, it is referring to presidentialism**.**

Mainwaring and Shugart (1997) acknowledge that presidentialism has a generally poor record of sustaining continuous democracy but that the most

important explanation for this phenomenon is not institutional, but rather is an effect of lower levels of development and non-democratic political cultures. It is true that Mexican political culture as has been characterized as semi-democratic or authoritarian, and that it has suffered from lower levels of development (Bartra and Otero 2005; Dominguez 2001). And, if democracy is interpreted as meeting certain criteria such as competitive elections, protection of civil rights and liberties, and due process of law, it has tended to be sustained when there is the presence of a democratic culture and higher levels of development (see Freedom House 2006). However, if one interprets democracy as a social democracy, a system in which people have the ability to be part of the decision-making processes regarding decisions which affect their socioeconomic lives, it can be determined that the failures of representative democracy *are* institutional (Lowy and Betto 2003).

First of all, active participation in the decision-making process is not open to everyone. The 'decision-making process', in this case refers to people actually being able to participate in how policy is formed, not only the decision to vote or not. In order to play an active role in major sociopolitical decisions, one has to compete in highly competitive 'winner takes all' elections, and shell out mass amounts of money and resources for expensive political campaigns (Linz and Valenzuela 1994; Ford 2002; Hill 2002). Thus active participation is reserved for elite groups which have the money and resources to compete. Passive participation meanwhile is limited to choosing representatives. And in the case of Mexico, where the president is usually chosen by his successor, this limitation is even more apparent (Linz and Valenzuela 1994).

The inability to participate in political and economic decision-making processes often results in voter disillusionment, feelings of helplessness, and being faced with choosing the lesser of two evils in elections (Hill 2002). This has

largely contributed to voter apathy. In countries where other factors such as extreme poverty, and marginalization present, it can contribute to violence and social unrest. This has been demonstrated by popular uprisings against legally elected governments in numerous Latin American states from the late 1990s (Shutt 2001).

Secondly, rule is imposed from the top, where decision-making power is placed into one or a group of élite politicians whose priorities often differ from those of the people. Government representatives often assume such positions because of personal ties, corporate ties, and personal gains. There is a lot of money to be made and prestige to be earned in such positions of authority. Because many leaders are in these positions in order to exploit the system for their own gain, they do not adequately represent the wants, needs, and concerns of the general electorate, especially not the needs of the indigenous, "unemployed or landless multitudes" (Nash 2001: 2; Lowy and Betto 2003).

Representatives are far removed from the general electorate, and even local government officials tend not to have personal trust ties with the local people they are supposedly representing. Of course, even in countries where the democratic culture is strong, such as Switzerland , there’s going to be a certain amount of marginalization the further away you get from trust relationships in politics. But in many Latin American countries, where politics tend to be more corrupt, there tends to be more of a patern of exploitation and marginalization than in industrialized countries (Shutt 2001). The dependence on free markets and economic globalization makes it virtually impossible to keep things on a small enough scale for people to participate meaningfully, or for representatives to actually represent their constituencies (Ford 2002;Lowy and Betto 2003; Parameswaran 2003). International financial organizations like the World Bank and IMF end up assuming functions that were historically fulfilled by the

community, region or state. When sovereign powers are removed from the local and put into the distant bureaucracies, local politics must also be redesigned to conform to the rules and practices of those very same distant bureaucracies (Canavagh et al. 2002).

Thirdly, in most presidential democracies, there seem to be few, if any mechanisms to foster a democratic culture based on participation. This system does not provide the general electorate, either through education or information campaigns, with information on how they can participate in politics. People end up viewing politics as too complicated because they don't have the necessary skills, or know how to obtain the necessary skills in order to take a more active role in politics. Also, perceiving that their voice doesn't mean much, even if they were to participate, presidential democracy does not give people an incentive to get involved. It ends up being a vicious circle, where the representative system lacks mechanisms to provide meaningful participation, and the status quo is maintained by an uninformed, uninvolved general electorate (Frey and Stutzer 2004). Without these mechanisms, representative democracies can easily become dictatorships if the general public does not have the means or know how to check their leaders (Li 1999; McCann and Lawson 2003).

Fourthly, removal of corrupt or inept representatives is very difficult, if not impossible, making it very difficult to hold politicians into account for their actions. Politicians who know that they cannot be removed once in power have little incentive to appease the general electorate (Linz and Valenzuela 1994). Currently, there are no constitutions in the Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries of the Americas in which the head of government can be dismissed from office before the end of his or her term, except in "extraordinary circumstances". Most constitutions allow for impeachment of the president, but only after finding of criminal or unconstitutional conduct, often involving a judicial ruling. Usually

it takes the majority of Congress to remove the president from office. Such procedures have led to only two presidents in Latin American history being impeached: Carlos Andrés Pérez in Venezuela in 1993, Fernando Collor de Mello in Brazil 1992.(Mainwaring and Shugart 1997: 18).

Fifthly, the rigidity of presidential democracy makes fundamental change difficult, if not impossible, and continues to maintain the status quo, and thus, the marginalization of peoples.

CHAPTER 7 ALTERNATIVES FOR THE FUTURE

In terms of building a social democracy, where people have control over their own socioeconomic lives, direct democracy would seem to be the better of the two current options. However,even in the bodies of fewer than a hundred members, pure democracy often does not in practice encourage meaningful widespread participation but instead merely serves to "disenfranchise those without the time, patience, and dedication required to sit through seemingly endless deliberative meetings" (Ford 2002: 1).

In addition, even in an organization of nontrivial size and complexity there are simply too many decisions to be made to expect anyone to participate in all of them. A smaller representative body on the contrary may be more efficient and able to act quickly to changing situations, and is much less costly to support. It has been discussed earlier, however, that this can turn into an entrenched group of ruling elites. And it is important point out that, larger bodies have the possibility to represent the electorate more accurately and enable voters to have closer relationships with their elected representatives (Ford 2002).

It is important must keep in mind that the choice of electoral system, popular directives and other cultural factors substantially affect how efficient, inefficient, corrupt etc. these systems will be (Ford 2002). To remedy corruption

and entrenchment, for example, certain aspects of direct democracy can be added to representative systems by way of voter recalls, popular initiatives, and referendum which allows voters to participate in certain important decisions directly while leaving the vast majority of the "day-to-day" decisions to elected representatives (Ford 2002: 2). According to advocates of representative democracy however, it is highly questionable whether most voters can or will take the time to study an initiative or referendum in enough detail to make an informed decision. Or in the view of Mill (2004), it is highly questionable whether they are intelligent enough to. Allowing the general electorate to participate in popular decision-making processes in this way can make the system much more "susceptible to temporary wins, selfish biases and radical or cultural prejudices of local or regional majorities than the deliberative decisions made publicly by representatives" (Ford 2002:2).

So where direct democracy allows for freedom, the same inherent problems of concentration of power, corruption and abuse of the system can occur in the absence of such mechanisms to prevent this from happening. We can see that, in terms of choosing a democracy which allows for greater participation and reduces marginalization, but at the same time does not foster corruption, neither pure direct democracy or representative democracy in the liberal sense are adequate. There is a need to find new alternatives which do have such mechanisms.

If the ultimate goal is social democracy, then no barriers to citizen participation seems to be the fundamental criteria, regardless of whether it is a representative or direct democracy, or a combination of the two. The ideal system to accomplish this would be a system which fosters the greatest amount of 'meaningful' and 'creative' participation across the general electorate. This means that people have to abandon the idea that holding elections to choose a government every 4 to 6 years represents an adequate expression of the popular

will (Shutt 2001). People need to be able to actively participate and discuss the issues. This also means that people need to be provided with tools to educate themselves about the political process (Parameswaran 2003). If people are educated about the political process and know that their vote does count, there will be more incentive for people to get involved in the political decision-making process (Feld and Kirchgässner 2000).

In addition, there's large consensus that in order for social democracy to work, it must also have restricted moneyed interests, mechanisms to hold officials to account, restricting patronage ties, and a flexible and dynamic design. It would also need to promote sustainable development, and provide its constituencies with basic needs i.e. public health, education and the protection of human rights (Canavagh 2002; Shutt 2001; MacEwan 1999; Woodin and Lucas 2004). In particular, preventing those with disproportionate wealth from gaining undue influence over the agenda of political parties and over the opinions of voters is "the single most important area of reform needed to enhance the quality of democracy", in societies where representative government is already well established and elsewhere. According to Shutt (2001: 157), the only "effective way of achieving such reform" would be to outlaw any contributions to parties funds other than the flat rate subscriptions of members.

Reform of the way public servants are appointed or elected, and making democratic systems more accountable and representative would require holding officials accountable once appointed. This would involve measures to ensure both their commitments and obligations were adhered to, and that no conflict of interest or opportunity for personal gain had been introduced or stopped (Shutt 2001:159). Officials would have to abstain from the receipt of gifts or any other "gainful employment" while in office. A crucial feature of any system seeking to guarantee genuine accountability would be absolute transparency and public

access to all information and documents relating to government activities, except in certain very limited and clearly defined areas (Shutt 2001: 159)

Restricting political ties to patronage is also a very key mechanisms to preventing corruption. According to Shutt (2001:158), one of the "most corrupting features" of contemporary Western democracy is enormous power of patronage typically placed in the hands of high officials. In particular the head of the executive branch (as president or prime minister) is generally accorded power over hiring and firing the members of the cabinet and other senior officials (Linz and Valenzuela 1994). The only way to rid the system of such corruption would be to strip the chief executive of the power to make certain appointments (Shutt 2001). This should be seen as a part of a broader effort to encourage those politicians who are motivated by public service rather than a personal ambition or economic gain. In other words, holding public office should be seen as a duty rather than a privilege (Shutt 2001).

To avoid the pitfalls of erosion of sovereignty and citizenship that seem to be an inevitable consequence of economic globalization, there is also strong consensus that regardless of the system, governing power should always lie within the community. Any decision that can be resolved at the community level should be solved there. And the same should apply for the regional, state, and eventually national and international levels (Canavagh 2002 ; Shutt 2001; Williamson 2003; Woodin and Lucas 2004). There is also a lean towards local currency. As it stands money is seen as a status symbol, where it should be seen as nothing more than a mode of exchange. Although this is a very important topic, it is not within the scope of this paper, see Woodin and Lucas (2004).

Critics of localization, that is local economy, and strengthened local governments, fear that it may bring threats to human rights or encourage autocracy. Of course localization provides no guarantee of democracy or

protection of human rights, but makes them far more likely as smaller communities offer much greater access to sources of power. Corporate globalization on the other hand is centralized, undemocratic, and destructive to community and their own ability to participate in democracy. The area of human rights is one which international agreements can continue to play a useful role (Canavagh 2002; Woodin and Lucas 2004).

Lastly, it is very important to be sensitive to the cultural, geographical, and other factors when creating a government system. There is not one-size-fits-all governing system which can be applied to all situations in all societies, something that the World Bank failed to recognize with their Structural Adjustment Programs (Demmers et.al 2004). Government structures should be flexible, dynamic and custom made to every situation in order to best fit the group it is designed to govern (Ford 2002).

In theory, delegative democracy has the potential to fulfill all of these criteria. As everyone can be a delegate, there is no barrier to participation. and no expensive political campaigns. Becoming a delegate does not by itself confer any representative power, it only indicates a willingness to act on behalf of others and a commitment to play a direct rule in the operation of the organization and take responsibilities for decisions made (Ford 2002).: It can of course arise that popular delegates could become quite visible. However this is dwarfed in comparison to the prestige awarded to heads of states (Mainwaring and Shugart 1997; Linz and Valenzuela 1994) . As delegates, power is ultimately vested in the delegates themselves. It is based on trust relationships at the local level, but it seems that it can be used at the municipal, regional and possibly the even state level as well. Delegative democracy has ultimately no barriers to participation. It is flexible and dynamic, and it can be adapted to virtually any type of organization (Ford 2002). It has the potential to be sustainable and provide the basic needs for

people, if that is what the general population agrees upon. Delegative democracy seems to be a viable alternative in theory, but can delegative democracy be reality? The next section will compare and contrast the Zapatista model with delegative democracy theory in order to see how similar the two systems are and if the Zapatistas system can be viewed as delegative democracy in practice.

6.1 The Zapatista Model: Delegative Democracy in Practice

According to my findings, The Zapatista model is a very close approximation of what delegative democracy is, with a few minor differences. Which in some ways made the Zapatista model more practical, but at the same time delegative democracy seems to have the possibility of being used in many more situations than the Zapatista model can. This will be discussed later in regard to applying the Zapatista model to other societies.

In delegative democracy, there are theoretically no barriers to participation. Anyone meeting certain "basic qualifications" can become a delegate. In the Zapatista system, there doesn't even seem to be such a criteria. In two interviews with the JBG, they explained that there are no required qualifications to be a delegate. This even includes language requirements. This seemed a bit strange, seeing as how there are many Zapatistas who speak various Mayan languages, and many who do not speak Spanish (observation Oventic, Emiliano Zapata; San Cristóbal; De Garracha Jan.-March 2006). It seem that this could be a major barrier to communication, but the Zapatista government officials offered assurance that it wasn't a problem so far. There is a course that delegates must take in order to learn how to govern, however this course is available to anyone (JBG De Garracha Feb 2006; JBG Oventic March 2006). All of the members of each Zapatista community are encouraged to participate in all of functions of the Zapatista autonomous municipalities, i.e. health, education (EZLN Jan 2006).

Like delegative democracy, the Zapatista system is founded on real personal and group trust relationships. Delegative democracy stipulates that, in order to maximize the chance that individual voters will be able to find delegates to which they have personal trust relationships, there should be no fixed limit to the total number of delegates. This can actually be a disadvantage in large organizations and countries where the body of delegates could grow into the millions. And paying full-time salaries to so many delegates would be unrealistic. This differs from the Zapatista system which does limit the amount of delegate positions, and delegates work on a volunteer basis so they do not represent an economic burden on the communities (JBG De Garracha Feb. 2006; JBG Oventic March 2006). Because the delegates represent communities and not individuals, there seems to be less of a need for everyone to fulfill the position of a delegate. This by no means however limits Zapatista citizens from getting involved. There are three different levels of civil government, and many opportunities to participate. Participating in the JBG is a bit limited,as there are only 24 delegates chosen for each region every three years. However, anyone expressing in need or want to become a member of the JBG is invited to do so. Those who, because of limited spaces, are not able to be a delegate on the JBG, can still be municipal or community council members. And because power lies in the community, these positions are considered just as important. Everyone is encouraged to participate on all levels of civil government, and in all of the different areas in which the MAREZ works i.e. health, education (JBG De Garracha 2006; JBG Oventic 2006).

In a delegative democracy, each member of the electorate is independently given the choice of participating actively in the organization by becoming a delegate, or participating passively by delegating their individual vote to a delegate. In the Zapatista system however delegates are chosen by communities

instead of individuals, but the logic is the same. Each delegate has a "weighted" power depending on how many people delegate their votes to them, or in the case of the Zapatistas the size of their communities (Subcommandante Marcos 2003:1; JBG Oventic 2006). Communities range from about 12 to 100 families, and anywhere from 40 people to 400. If one community had 300 members for example, then the delegate would have a weight of 300 (Ford 2002; JBG March 2006).

Because there's no way to limit the amount of voting power that one delegate can have in delegative democracy, certain disparities will undoubtedly emerge among the different delegates. Ford (2002) doesn't see this as a problem as long as the disparities represent the will of the people. The chance of the emergence of disparities however in the Zapatista system is much less because voter power is limited to the size of their community (Subcommandante Marcos 2003). Thus there are much clearer boundaries set on the collective power that delegates have, without restricting their freedom.

Like delegative democracy, the primary power structures in the Zapatista government are bottom-up, both voters and delegates are free to withdraw their vote from delegates at any time and designate them to another if they so wish. This seems quite similar to the Zapatistas notion of governing by obeying. Governing by obeying also seems to mitigate problems of internal corruption and misrepresentation which can arise under a delegative system (Ford 2002). Delegates are also free to choose their own level of participation in order to prevent being overwhelmed or overburdened. The Zapatistas have found a clever way to balance both their civil lives and their political duties by permitting delegates work in weekly or biweekly rotations. This allows delegates more time with their other work and with their families (JBG De Garracha February 2006; JBG Oventic March 2006).

Sustainable Development

As mentioned before delegative democracy can provide a platform for sustainable development, if that is what the general electorate desires. The Zapatistas have made sustainable development an important pillar of their society. Many of their sustainable development projects started after NAFTA allowed for heavily subsidized corn from the USA, which forced local farmers to sell their corn harvests for less than what they cost to produce, and self subsistence farmers were only producing one third of the corn needed to subsist. One of the Zapatistas major goals at this time was to find farming techniques that use no inputs from the market, chemical or otherwise, and to develop sustainable production adequate for peoples' subsistence and without any reliance on neoliberal markets, thereby combining autonomy with resistence. The end result was a focus on "agroecology"(Collier and Quaratiello 2005: 197).

Agroecology is the term to describe "the approach to sustainable and preferably organic agriculture"(Collier and Quaratiello 2005: 197). Thus far, the Zapatistas have created Mut Vitz Coffee Cooperative, that grows organic coffee which they sell directly to international solidarity groups, avoiding the middle man, and making prices for their crop often more favorable than even 'fair trade' coffee(EZLN January 2006; Collier and Quaratiello 2005: 197). Their use of both traditional and organic cultivation for both coffee and corn has also been a success. The Zapatistas are currently planning many other agroecological projects including horticulture of vegetables, and raising animals on organic feed (Collier and Quaratiello 2005). Some of the Zapatistas have solar panels to produce electricity, but solar panels can be very expensive and are not available to all communities (Zapatista Citizen E. 2006). Their communal living produces very little consumption, and thus very little waste. In 1996 the Enlace Civil or Civic

Network was established in the Municipio de Trabajo (Municipality of Work) to advise projects of education, health, production and commercialization all outside of the neoliberal framwork (Collier and Quaratiello 2005).

Mechanisms for Creating an Informed Electorate

The Zapatista movement is based on providing mechanisms to teach people about politics and how they can get involved. Since one of their major goals is solidarity and educating people on how to be self-sustaining communities, the Zapatista government and EZLN are constantly informing people about what is going on locally and throughout Mexico in terms of politics (observation in various areas of Chiapas Jan-March 2006).

Their government has mechanisms to insure that the task of governing is not exclusive to one group, so that learning is for the greatest number of people. This serves to reduce corruption, prevent power from being concentrated, and give all members of their society an opportunity to directly participate in local government. Any Zapatista can contribute to governance, and it is not prevented by gatekeepers or family ties. Unlike the caciques, who can be easily controlled by local state officials trying to gain voter support, the Zapatistas refuse all state funding (JBG 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003) .

Very interestingly, in the autonomous schools they teach 'social movement' within the Humanities discipline. In this way, children are actually socialized from a very young to be critical to the government, and to know their rights, and to know that that they have a right, and even a duty to get involved in politics (Zapatista school official 2006).

The Zapatistas encourage participation and it is socialized within their philosophy of learning by governing (see Findings, Government Structure). The fact that the Zapatistas know that their voice will be heard on different matters, are

provided with incentives to get more involved in the decision-making process (EZLN January 2006).

In summary, it is apparent that Zapatista autonomy is providing better for the people than the neglectful, oppressive Mexican state. The Zapatistas have come up with revolutionary ways of governing which have taken the primary provisionary and government role where before, there was none to be found. The Zapatistas support bases have grown immensely over the past decades, partly due to their ability to be social provisionary, but also because of their ability to provide a space for dialogue, local government, and civil law among sometimes starkly divided communities. The latter can be viewed as a great accomplishment in that the lack of these mechanisms contributes to why many Latin American countries have not been able to govern their highly plural, and often internally divided societies (Mindiola 2006).

These local systems are working better, from a social democratic source on the Python yeah the point of view, however even in light of its new liberal democracy status, Mexico is not embracing these systems. In the federal government's defense, it is claiming that if they were to implement the San Andreas accords, allowing for the Zapatistas and others to have autonomous rights (the accords grant autonomous rights not separatism or anarchy) it would create a virtual "balkanization" of the state (Grayson 2001:1). Others argue that their de facto status, with no single constitution other than the San Andreas accords to bind them will make it very difficult for the extension and the function of these autonomies (Eber 2006; Meneses 2006; Cal y Mayor 2005). In the next section , this paper will discuss why the Zapatista self-government model is not in conflict with the concept of the nation state, and in fact complements its functions.

CHAPTER 8 CRITICISMS

A State within the State? Autonomy Versus Separatism

George Grayson, a 'specialist' on contemporary Mexico argues that "local autonomy can enable the strong to suppress the weak in a state riven with myriad feuds ." He suggests that the adoption of the indigenous practices known as "uses and customs" or usos y costumbres "could find elders dictating how villagers vote, as well as continued male dominance over females at a time when Mexico is making unprecedented democratic advances"(Grayson 2001: 1).

Grayson's argument does have merit, as the adoption of usos y costumbres in Oaxaca has led to problems within practicing communities in several areas. There is an increasing awareness of the existence of political exclusion registered in municipalities ruled by customary practices and law. Indeed, despite the values of equality and solidarity that (theoretically) guide the exercise of public authority in these towns, the usos y costumbres regime denies the full extension of citizenship rights. Although the nature and type of denial of citizenship rights varies across municipalities, in general, the sectors excluded are women, "avecindados" (newcomers), and individuals born in the municipality who do not live there (radicados). Women do not vote in 18% of the municipalities in which municipal elections are ruled by usos y costumbres and newcomers are disenfranchised at around 30%. Therefore, although these exclusions to political participation do not occur elsewhere (or to the same degree), in the most exclusionary of these municipalities there is a real threat to the principle of equality of rights. Indeed, the exclusion of political rights to important sectors of the population has been pointed out as a nondemocratic feature of the system (Moreno Jaimes 2006: 7)

In addition to problems of political exclusion, lack of mechanisms of post-electoral conflict resolution have led to an increasing number of conflicts within societies ruled by uses and customs. Oaxaca State Electoral institute now faces the

challenge of helping municipalities ruled by usos y costumbres to solve their post-electoral conflicts in an "effective, non-disruptive, peaceful way". According to Moreno Jaimes a "new institutional reform might even be necessary to provide them with mechanisms of conflict resolution in cases of post-electoral disputes"(Moreno Jaimes 2006: 7).

So Grayson is correct in saying that certain indigenous practices including those in Oaxaca are flawed in their implementation. However, Grayson's comments show his ignorance of the Zapatista way of doing, as he has not differentiated between the two systems. He is directly comparing the system of uses and customs with the Zapatista model, and ignoring the fact that their governing practices are fundamentally different. For example, unlike Oaxaca which has an hierarchical system through their Indian Chiefs or elders called *caciques*, the Zapatista model is not hierarchical. As mentioned before, there are no special qualifications, or requirements that one needs to be a member of any level of civil government, the community, municipal, or regional. The members of the Good Government Juntas change continually, allowing the JBG's to be rotated among the members of all the autonomous councils of each region. This is so that the task of governing is not exclusive to one group, that there are no 'professional' leaders, and that learning is for the greatest number of people. This serves to reduce corruption, prevent power from being concentrated, and give all members of their society an opportunity to directly participate in local government. Thus, any Zapatista can contribute to governance, and it is not prevented by gatekeepers or family ties. Unlike the caciques, who can be easily controlled by local state officials trying to gain voter support, the Zapatistas refuse all state funding (JBG 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003) .

In terms of democracy and participation of women, "safeguards were included in the San Andrés agreement to ensure that constitutional guarantees

were not weakened in particular with regard to human rights and the dignity of women" (Saramago 1999:1). In fact the Zapatistas coined the Revolutionary Law On Women in the San Andrés Accords, and it is required by law that women make up 50% of the positions of the JBG (EZLN 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003; Dominguez 2001)

Unlike the system in Oaxaca, the Zapatistas themselves have a conflict resolution mechanism already in place and don't have to rely on outside mediators. They encourage people to solve their problems with dialogue as opposed to violence. In fact, the the Zapatistas JBG is gaining so much legitimacy, andtheir conflict resolution mechanism is working so well, that the Chiapas state government and municipal governments even come to them to resolve problems in Zapatista jurisdiction (Subcommandante Marcos 2003).

Grayson also argues that self-determination can create a "state within a state," as municipalities demand control of minerals, timber, and water resources located within their boundaries. Even if handled responsibly in Chiapas, autonomy would "excite cries for similar treatment in the nine other states" where indigenous people constitute 14 percent or more of the population, a process that skeptics insist would "Balkanize" the country (Grayson 2001: 1). It is true that one of the key elements of indigenous governance is the self-determination of peoples, of which the practical expression is autonomy (not separatism) based on a "regulatory system that organizes the social life" (Mindiola However autonomy, as understood by the Zapatistas and the San Andres accords, is in no way a synonynym for secession or separatism.

The Zapatistas definition of autonomy incorporates more than just self-determination, it also means the rights to celebrate and be proud of one's identity and culture, language etc. In other words, being able to determine and maintain their own worldview and not conform to the dominant worldview and being able

to practice their own customs, cultures, governing practices, conflict resolution mechanisms and rule of law. The Zapatistas would like a "world where all worlds fit" (EZLN 2006)

According to the San Andrés Accords, *autonomy* does not imply that the state will stop having responsibility with the new levels of organization, which will have the right to public compensation from and others that are due to indigenous peoples. The accords were drafted in order to comply with the federal and state constitutions and the laws emerging from them. Quite contrary to Grayson's belief, the San Andrés Accords call for the establishment of "general foundations that may insure unity and national objectives" while at the same time allowing federal entities the "true power to legislate and act in accordance to the particularities of the indigenous issues coming before them" (San Andrés Accords 1996; 1).

In terms of demanding control over minerals and natural resources, the Zapatistas view access to such resources as a human right. In other words, resources should be used in the best possible way to benefit the public. This does not mean that the public will have 100% control over all the resources without allowing other people in Mexico to benefit, but they do demand having a say in the matter of how these resources are distributed (Subcommandante Marcos 2003; EZLN January 2006).

Although not implementing the San Andres Accords, Mexico has ratified and officially recognizes the International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 169/89 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries. Thus, Mexico constitutionally recognizes the rights of these peoples, and their system of customary practices and laws as one of their collective rights. Nevertheless, the "prevailing legal monism" not only breaches the ILO Convention but also obstructs the functioning of a "parallel, indigenous normative system, thus

generating social conflicts" (Mindiola 2006:1).

Mexico's unwillingness implement the San Andreas accords that recognize the rights of indigenous people is evidence that they do not consider these de facto autonomous projects as a viable solution to indigenous governance and democracy in Mexico, despite the fact that they seem to be working for the Zapatistas. Some see this is a major impediment to the future of the Zapatista movement and believe that if they are not able to cooperate with the state, and become *de jure* as opposed to *de facto* autonomy, the system is doomed to failure. The next section will discuss de facto versus *de jure* autonomy, and explore the Zapatista view on whether they should give up their *de facto* 'autonomies in rebellion' status.

De Facto Autonomy?

The Zapatista uprising led to internal violence, fractionalized towns, divided communities, divided families and indeed a debilitated EZLN (Cal y Mayor 2005: 240). According to many members of Mexican civil society and scholars alike, the Zapatistas need to change from autonomy de facto to autonomy de jure (Menenses 2006; Chiapas NGO official 1 2006). According to Cal y Mayor (2005), the Zapatistas need to work with the state, and reform their constitutional reforms of 2001 because up until now, their model of autonomy only includes them. He believes that the autonomous Zapatista projects should be more inclusive and pleural, and permit the reconstruction of the towns in respect of diversity (Cal y Mayor 2005).

This is no easy task as the villages of Chiapas are "profoundly divided by violence in the midst of diversification and globalization "(Cal y Mayor 2005: 241). The creation of the Junta of Good Government could be a step in the right direction if the Zapatista program is able to realize their actual goals. Cal y Mayor believes that as long as they continue in the path of *de facto* autonomy and not

autonomy *de jure*, they're going to be plagued with internal confrontations, and conflicts (Cal y Mayor 2005). Currently, the different Zapatista support bases are living under their own rules, which do not always coincide with each other. Of course they all adhere to the ILO and San Andrés accords, but they are free to govern their own communities as they see fit. The Zapatistas do not accept any government money, and they go is an even as far as not registering births and deaths with the state (Salmonelli 2005). If the Zapatistas start living in de jure autonomy, it will no longer be territory in resistance, a transition which many view as grave to the Zapatista movement and their virtues (Menenses 2006; Chiapas NGO official 1 2006). Cal y Mayor sees this is the biggest weakness, and the ultimate cost and sacrifice and fragmentation of the communities and internal members (Cal y Mayor 2005: 241).

These are valid concerns, however the Zapatistas seem to be managing quite well considering the circumstances. They're not waiting for the government to give them "charity and speeches"(Subcommandante Marcos 2003: one). They are working to improve their living conditions, and they are achieving that(see section on MAREZ). Paradoxically, their conditions, although still a long way from being ideal, are better than those communities which are receiving federal aid. And this can be confirmed through visiting the communities (Subcommandante Marcos 2003; observation Las Tacitas, Emeliano Zapata, Oventic, De Garrucha 2006)

In terms of the Zapatistas *de facto* status being weakness, their communities in rebellion status seems to actually be promoting solidarity among the different support bases (Zapatista citizen E., J. , V., R. , G. 2006). The San Andrés Accords, as we see in the discussion on a State within a State, is already inclusive and pleural. True, one of the Zapatistas most challenging jobs is to remain flexible and responsive to "the local realities of each community," and directives coming

from the Zapatista leadership are not always workable within certain communities (Eber 2006). But they should not necessarily be viewed as a weakness. It has in a way, made the Zap6atista civil government very flexible, dynamic and open to change. And the fact that they are still here, and their support groups continue to grow is evidence that it is working (observation, throughout Mexico 2006; Subcommandante Marcos 2003).

The nature of the strong presidential system, governmental corruption, and concentration of corporate power has made it virtually impossible for *de jure* autonomy and self-government. The government continues to exclude them from the decision-making process of policies which profoundly affect their lives. A prime example being the government approval of a new $ 8 billion free trade agreement (the Plan Puebla-Panama-PPP) that would profoundly affect the lives of thousands of indigenous people, without consulting major indigenous constituencies (Pickard 2004).

Exclusion of the majority of indigenous people and in the forming and implementing of state and national policies that affect their lives still a reality in Mexico. The Zapatistas provide their citizens with the ability to make decisions within their areas of limited control. However, if they were to become *de jure* autonomies, they they would essentially be co-opted by the state meaning essence that they accept going back into the same poverty and servitude that they have been in before the uprising. Therefore, the autonomies in rebellion represent something far larger than the uprising itself. They have started to question the legitimacy and legality of the state's own institutions.

The Zapatistas denounce their exclusion, discrimination and their oppression, and do not believe that new negotiations with the state will come to any good (EZLN March 2006). It seems obvious from the federal government's unwillingness to implement the San Andreas accords that they do not take these

projects seriously and they will insist on maintaining the status quo. In the Zapatista view, the "institutional system has been exhausted [...] all political parties and the bureaucratic elite are a bunch of traitors, and the three main doors-executive, Legislature, Judiciary-are closed" (Bartra and Otero 2001: 405).

CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSIONS

1. liberal democracy is not synonymous with social democracy

One of the largest problems with liberal democracy in Mexico is that it does not have mechanisms to prevent the concentration of power through its elected officials. Due to Mexico's dependence on the Bretton Woods institutions, government policymakers are even more sensitive to the demands of corporations. Those who end up being the main beneficiaries of liberal democracy are Corporation and big business.

Even when one controls for all of the factors which qualify a state to be a liberal democracy (i.e. egalitarian institutions, fairn elections, etc.), there is still concentration of power in just a few hands. Corruption and marginalization can still arise because of the underlying neoliberal free-market agenda, which is flawed in many ways. The most fundamental being that it values corporate interest over the public good, which has contributed to a long list of negative social impacts (Korten 2001; Shutt 2001; Woodin and Lucas 2004). In addition to contributing to the erosion of state sovereignty and citizenship, it is expansionist, rigid, and locks out other alternatives for democracy (Demmers et.al 2004; Hogenboom 2004; MacEwan 1999; Korten 2001). The effects of this oppressive and exploitative system are felt even more profoundly in Third World countries, where the accumulation of loan debt has increased their dependence on neoliberal lending institutions (Demmers et al. 2004).

2.The Zapatista model has the potential of being a viable democratic alternative to liberal democracy in Mexico

It has been discussed that the Zapatistas have been able to fulfill all of the criteria deemed to be necessary for having a social democracy, although this is limited to regional governance within their areas of influence. In order to be a viable democratic alternative to liberal democracy, it would arguably need to find ways to adapt to the state and national levels of governing, as representative democracy currently allows. One of the main contradictions I see would be cultural problems, namely the conflict between communal rights versus individual rights, and their deliberate practices, where the discussion is often just as important if not more than an outcome (Flood 1999).

The Zapatista model is a natural occurring phenomenon that was developed from the underlying need of a local government. It has been adapted so that it can be used at several levels of government, but the underlying forces which drive this system are largely culturally related and need-based. This would seem to make it very difficult to try to use their model in circumstances which differ culturally and circumstantially from their own. Some see a conflict between collective rights and individual rights (Grayson 2001). However, collective rights like the decision as to the use of natural resources, are not only not in contradiction of individual rights, but communal rights allow these resources to be extended everyone, not just to a few. In the advances that have been made in the MAREZ, there has been no increase in the violation of individual human rights. What has increased are better living conditions (Subcommandante Marcos 2003:1). The Zapatistas nurture participation and work for the common good. And anyone of the Caracols you can be a sign that says "para todos todo, para nosotros nada" which means for all, everything for us, nothing." Though this may seem like a bit of an abstract thought, it means that no few will benefit at the cost of the many. But on the

contrary, everyone will have everything.

In terms of government design, delegative democracy, which the Zapatista model is based on, can be used in both community settings, as we see int he Zapatistas, but the original premis was that it would vest ultimate voting and delegating power into individuals themselves.

3. The Zapatista model does not need to be applied to state and national level as ultimate power should be invested in the community

According to participatory democracy theory, alternatives for a sustainable future, ultimate sovereignty should lie in the community, not the state and not the nation (Woodin and Lucas 2004) In this sense, the Zapatistas are one step ahead of the competition. But this doesn't change the fact that we live in a globalized world, and the majority of people who are not already living in communal situations do not seem too eager to give up their material possessions, jobs, and their way of life to go back to farming the land. Even many indigenous people who have been removed from the communal society do not want to go back (Chiapas Department of Education official 2006; NGO official 2006).

A shift back to the local does not necessarily mean a shift to the Stone Age. The Zapatistas themselves realize the importance of being compatible with, but not dependent on economic global forces. Though even with their self-sustaining economies, the Zapatistas are not 100% immune from engaging in commerce on an international level. The main difference is they choose the rules of how they will market their products themselves at the price they choose, as opposed to following the rules set by some far removed global financial institutions (Collier And Quaratiello 2005). This idea of local economy and local government does have the potential to work, and it doesn't necessarily mean that people can't go on living in similar ways than they are now. The big difference is that people will

have more control over their social economic lives (Williamson 2003; Woodin and Lucas 2004).

4. People do not need elite rule

There are extensive arguments in support of the necessity for representative democracy in the form that it takes today (Mill 2004; Schumpeter 1950). A fundamental one being that the general electorate is not intelligent or informed enough to rule themselves. Another is, that without professional, skilled representatives, society would fall apart into autocracies void of civil law. But obviously this is false. The Zapatistas are a living breathing example of academically uneducated, nonprofessionals, non-leaders that are ruling themselves better than a makeshift Mexican liberal democracy could ever hope to do. Where the state and national representatives have worked to make divisions between different indigenous and mestizo groups to guarantee maintenance of the political status quo, the Zapatistas are working to heal the wounds created by a history of authoritarian rule. They believe in using dialogue, information campaigns, and solidarity to further their cause. Though the Zapatistas maintain their de facto rebellion status, sometimes even state officials come to the Zapatistas for help in dealing with certain problems like the rule of law in their jurisdiction (JBG March 2006; Hidalgo Feb 2006).

It is apparent that the farther government moves from local self-governance and trust relationships the less 'representative' representatives will be. An increasing global environment driven by economic forces renders politicians even more far removed from their constituencies. It is concluded that Presidentialism is a form of representative democracy which is especially susceptible to corporate manipulation due to lack of mechanisms to prevent the concentration of corporate power. Representative democracy together with an all-powerful, unaccountable, unrestrained market economy allows market interests to dwarf the interests of the

public. As discussed in the case study of the Zapatistas, citizens do a much better job of ruling themselves than far removed representatives, who may not, and often do not possess the same values or perceive the world in the same way as the ones that they are supposedly representing. On the contrary, Zapatista government relationships are based on trust and the power ultimately lies in the community, so officials better know how to address the needs of their public (Eber 2006; Hidalgo 2006).

5.*In most societies, the move to autonomous self-government would involve major revolutionary changes* in the existing power relations, in politics, in economics, and ethics of the society (MacEwan 1999;Parameswaran 2004). In order to make the transition towards a true social democracy, where people have control over their own economic, political and social lives, there needs to be a force strong enough to significantly alter political culture to provide a paradigm shift. Thus, a critical component to this new democracy would be emphasis on solidarity and education.

The Zapatistas point out that although their system is working for them, their solution is not the only answer to social democracy. Every community, state, nation etc. is unique and any governing system should be flexible, dynamic, and sensitive to local idiosyncrasies. In order for democracy to be realized, it must be realized in one's own way, not by artificially imposed representation structures and unaccountable free markets.

6. Indigenous people are an important source for democratization and change

Rigid representative democracy systems such as presidentialism, make it difficult for real change to occur through representative politics, and it lacks the mechanisms to educate the general electorate. For real change to occur, it seems apparent that any mobilization towards a social democracy would need to be done from the grassroots level, working with solidarity, and providing a mechanisms for

the educating and encouraging citizens to use the economic and political rights. This is exactly what the Zapatistas are doing and few would dispute the fact that there are powerful external source for democratization in Mexico because of this (Eber 2006; Bartra Otero 2005; Collier, Collie). According to Nash (2001:3)

"Social movements generated by people deprived of their subsistence resources, gainful employment, and those marginalized or excluded from commodity markets in which to sell their products, appeal to morality more often than the rational calculus of surplus value extortion."

The Zapatistas as well as other indigenous groups in Mexico have found important allies in NGOs concerned with issues of human rights and environmental damage, and poverty reduction. This is bridging a gap between international civil society and often misunderstood and misrepresented indigenous peoples. It is in these "transnational spaces" that new forms of governments are starting to emerge which may enable the human species to survive in a globally integrated world that permits alternative ways of coexistence and survival (Nash 2001:3).

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